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ABSTRACT

A 1999 survey of employer views on vocational education and training (VET) interviewed 3,558 employers of recent VET graduates and 2,495 employers with no VET graduates. Focuses The focus was employers' characteristics, their general views on VET, and information on their organizations' training practices. Findings indicated the following: (1) the estimated number of organizations employing recent VET graduates increased steadily over the last five years; (2) type of industry was not a factor in the extent to which employers have recent VET graduates; (3) employers had generally positive responses to the value and relevance of VET; (4) almost half of employers with no VET graduate employees believed VET qualifications were not relevant to their industry, while a quarter believed that training requirements were met inhouse; (5) a larger proportion of employers had graduates who received training with a private provider rather than a technical and further education (TAFE) institution; (6) overall satisfaction with the VET sector was generally High; (7) employers of recent VET graduates had a positive view of the current level of VET delivery; and (8) employers with VET graduates were more likely to subsidize or pay for employees' training. (The text includes 45 tables and 44 figures. Appendixes include methodology, glossary, and questionnaire.) (YLB)

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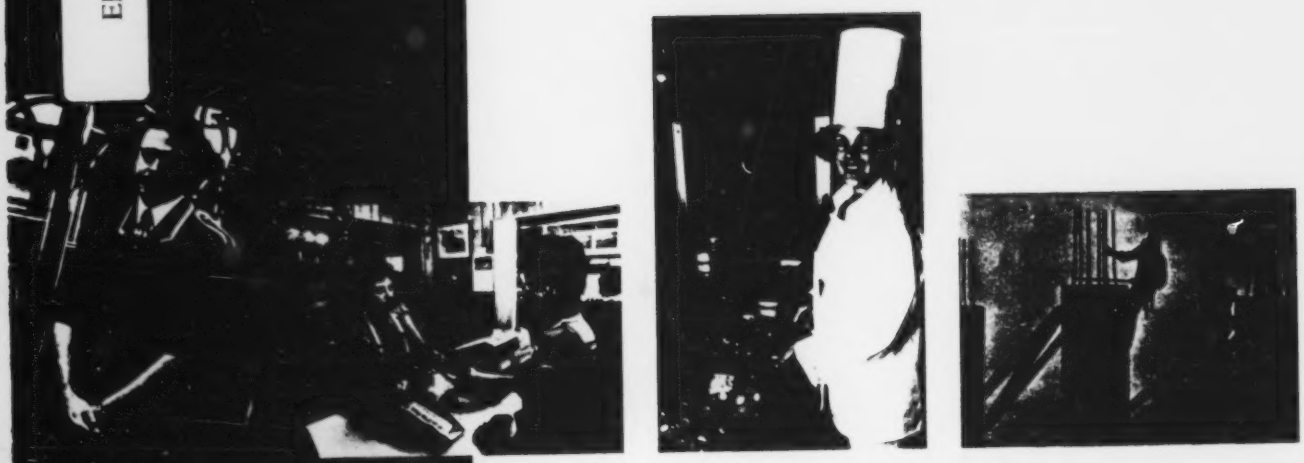

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Survey of Employer Views on Vocational Education and Training

national report

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Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics 1999

Survey of Employer Views on Vocational Education and Training National Report

Published by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd
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About the survey

This report presents the results from the 1999 national Survey of Employer Views on vocational education and training. This is the third survey of this nature with previous surveys conducted in 1995 and 1997. In the two earlier surveys, in-scope employers were defined as those with at least one employee who had completed a vocational education and training (VET) course of at least 200 hours within the two years prior to the survey (a recent VET graduate). This group was targeted again in the 1999 survey however, in addition, a sample of employers with no VET graduate employees was also surveyed.

The survey questionnaire for the 1997 and 1999 surveys has, in the main, remained consistent enabling comparisons between much of the data produced. Information for both groups of employers has been collected about their characteristics, general views on VET, training practices and their knowledge of VET. For employers with recent VET graduate employees, additional information has been collected about their views on the availability, relevance and quality of course delivery and graduates' skills.

The 1999 survey focuses on the difference between those employers with direct experience of vocational education and training and others. Employers with recent VET graduates were divided into two groups based on whether they had contact with these graduates during their course. This was determined by whether the graduate(s) had completed their training course before, or after they commenced their current employment. Employers with at least one graduate who completed their course after commencing employment with them, were asked for their views on the training course and graduates' skills. Employers who had no graduates who completed their course after being employed with them were asked for their views on their graduates' skills, only.

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Preface

About *Australian VET Statistics - 1999 Survey of Employer Views on VET*

I am pleased to introduce *Australian VET Statistics – 1999 Survey of Employer Views on VET*, part of an on-going suite of publications produced by NCVER. The national survey collections are undertaken by NCVER on behalf of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

This publication presents some of the highlights of employer views on VET in Australia. Based on their experience of recently graduated employees, employers' views have been sought on specific aspects of the quality, relevance and availability of VET. The recently graduated employees comprise those who completed their course at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute or with a private provider of VET. Employers' general views on VET, as well as some information on their organisations' training practices, have been sought from both employers of recent VET graduates and employers who currently have no VET graduate employees. The analysis in this report has primarily focused on the national picture, although some limited State/Territory information has been included.

This year has been the first time employers with no VET graduate employees have been surveyed. This is an important addition to the available information on VET from the industry perspective.

There have been a number of enhancements to the publication this year in comparison with the previous survey's report (*Employer Satisfaction with VET, 1997, National Report*) and include:

- introduction of information on employers with no VET graduate employees;
- comparisons between the employer groups, where appropriate; and
- tables of relative standard errors, to aid readers in understanding the reliability of the data.

Chris Robinson
Managing Director
NCVER Ltd
February 2000

Related NCVER publications

Australian VET Statistics 1999 survey of employer views: at a glance

Scope of the collection

The survey relates to:

- *employers with at least one employee who completed a VET course of at least 200 hours duration within the two years prior to the survey (recent VET graduate); and*
- *employers without any current employees who have graduated from a VET course of at least 200 hours duration.*

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1 Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

The vocational education and training (VET) system in Australia includes publicly and privately funded VET delivered by a wide range of training institutions and enterprises. VET can be on the job, off the job, online and through other flexible delivery methods. The sector has grown enormously over the past ten years, up almost 65%, to about 1.5 million students in VET in 1998[1]. The estimated total level of investment in training in 1998 was $8.5 billion and the government funded component of this was $3.7 billion[2].

The 1999 survey of employer views on VET aims to provide information on the industry perspective of VET, focusing on:

- employers with recent VET graduates and their views on specific aspects of VET delivery;
- general views of employers with recent VET graduate employees and employers with no VET graduate employees; and
- training practices of, and related issues for, these two employer groups.

This is the third survey of this nature and, for the first time, includes the perspective of employers without VET graduate employees (recent or otherwise).

1.2 Employers with recent VET graduates

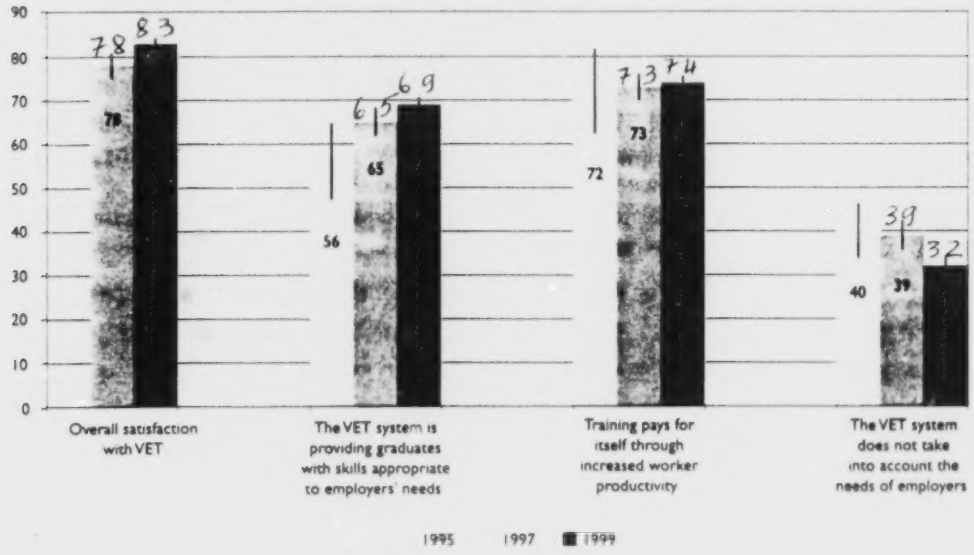
Change over time

Key indicators

The number of organisations employing recent VET graduates has steadily increased over the last five years. In 1995 the number was estimated to be 63,000, rising to approximately 104,000 in 1997 and up further in 1999, with some 117,000 employers with recent VET graduate employees. On the whole, employer views on VET are more positive now, as shown by some key indicators set out in figure 1.1. Data on employers' overall satisfaction with VET are available for only two surveys but show a slight increase in the number of employers who reported being satisfied or very satisfied with VET. Compared with 1995, a larger proportion of employers in 1999 agreed or strongly agreed that the VET system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs, while the proportion who agreed, or strongly agreed, that training pays for itself through increased productivity has remained stable over the three surveys. Also positive, there has been a drop from 1997 to 1999 in the proportion of employers holding the view that the VET system does not take into account the needs of employers.

1. Australian Vocational Education & Training Statistics 1998, NCVER.
2. Australian National Training Authority National Report, 1998 Vol 3.

Figure 1.1: Selected key indicators of employers' views on VET, per cent, 1995, 1997 and 1999



Type of training provider

There has been a shift in the type of institution at which graduates have received their training. The shift has been towards a larger proportion of employers with recent VET graduate employees having trained at a private provider rather than TAFE. In 1997 around three in four employers with recent VET graduates (75%), employed only TAFE trained graduates while less than one in five employers (16%) employed only non-TAFE trained graduates. By 1999, employers with only TAFE trained recent graduates had declined to around two in three (67%) and those with only non-TAFE trained had risen to around one in four (24%).

Also, the extent of this shift varies across organisational size. Organisations with a small employment size show little change in graduates' training provider type however, the shift from TAFE to non-TAFE trained graduates was apparent in medium and large sized organisations. For example, in 1997 some three quarters (77%) of medium sized organisations had only TAFE graduates and this declined to a little over half (54%) with only TAFE graduates in 1999. From 1997 to 1999, the number of large organisations with only non-TAFE graduates rose from less than one in ten (7%) to slightly more than one in four (29%).

At a national level, this shift towards non-TAFE trained graduates does not appear to have a direct relationship with the overall satisfaction of employers. In the survey, employers with all or mostly TAFE graduates were asked to give a rating of their overall satisfaction based on their experience with TAFE, and similarly, employers with all or mostly graduates from non-TAFE training providers were asked to give a rating for that provider type. In this context, there is little apparent difference in overall satisfaction of employers in the two groups with at least eight in ten employers in both groups reporting they were either satisfied or very satisfied.

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Overall satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the VET sector was generally high. Highlights include:

- some 83% of employers of VET graduates, compared with 78% in 1997, gave a score of 6 or more out of 10 as a measure of their satisfaction with VET;
- satisfaction was high for employers of all sizes, but was particularly the case for medium (84%) and small (83%) employers; and
- high overall satisfaction was expressed in some industries, with the industries of Agriculture, forestry and fishing (94%), Mining (91%), Government administration and defence (91%), and Transport (90%) among those with higher proportions of satisfied employers.

Relative importance of selected aspects of VET and aspects employers consider most in need of improvement

The 1999 survey is different from past surveys in that it focuses on the difference between those employers with direct experience of vocational education and training and others. Employers with recent VET graduates were divided into two groups based on whether they had contact with these graduates during their course. This was determined by whether the graduate(s) had completed their training course before, or after they commenced their current employment. Employers with at least one graduate who completed their course after commencing employment with them, were asked for their views on nine aspects of the training and four aspects of graduates' skills. Employers with all graduates who completed their course before being employed with them were asked for their views on the four aspects of their graduates' skills, only. Appendix 7 sets out the thirteen aspects of VET delivery and the corresponding response categories which were provided to employers to enable them to assign a level to both current delivery and their expectations of an excellent VET provider.

Employers with at least one graduate who completed their course after commencing their current employment

Of those employers who were asked about their graduates' skills and courses, the relatively more important aspects were considered to be teacher ability and relevance of course content. Around half (55% and 48% respectively) considered these to be extremely important.

Graduates' work ethic, graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks with relatively little supervision and teacher industry experience were considered equal in importance. For each of these three aspects, approximately 45% of employers felt that these were extremely important aspects of the 'service' provided by a VET organisation. Around one in three employers felt value for money and course balance between theory and practice (36% for both) were extremely important aspects.

These employers were asked to nominate, in order of priority, the four aspects of service which they would most like to see improved. The aspect most commonly nominated first priority, by more than one in four employers (27%), was relevance of course content. Priorities for improvement after this were teacher ability (10%), course balance between theory and practice (9%) and flexibility in course delivery (9%). Graduates' work ethic, teacher industry experience and level of communication about course development then followed, with some 5% of employers nominating each of these as the aspect in which they would most like to see improvement.

When all the aspects nominated for improvement are considered (regardless of priority), the relevance of course content was still foremost as the aspect most in need of improvement.

Employers with all graduates who completed their course before commencing their current employment

For employers who were asked about their graduates' skills only, the aspect most cited by employers as extremely important was the ability of graduates to work and cope with setbacks without supervision (40%). The next most important aspect of graduates' skills was graduates' work ethic with one in three (35%) considering this to be extremely important. These were followed by value for money of the training investment and level of graduates' skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience. For each of these aspects, approximately one in four (24% and 26%) employers felt that these were extremely important aspects of graduates' skills.

When asked to nominate the one aspect of graduates' skills they would most like to see improved, graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision was most commonly nominated, by around one in three employers (32%). This was followed by graduates' work ethic and graduates' skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience (both 22%). The aspect least nominated as a priority for improvement was value for money with around one in ten (10%) employers nominating this.

Views on selected aspects of current delivery compared with employers' expectations of an excellent VET provider

For each aspect of VET delivery, employers were asked for their views on the level of current delivery and the level of delivery they would reasonably expect from an excellent VET provider. In order to do this, they were provided with descriptions of four levels (level four being the highest) of delivery from which to choose.

Although the four levels for each of the aspects are not related to a single scale (ie they are not directly comparable), some general observations can be made about employers' views across these areas of VET delivery.

Overall, across the different aspects of delivery, employers of recent VET graduates have a positive view of the current level of VET delivery. At a very broad view:

- around two in three employers perceive current course delivery as being in the top two levels;
- with the exception of value for money, around three in four employers perceive current skills of graduates as being in the top two levels;
- just under two in three employers perceive value for money as being in the top two levels; and
- across all aspects, less than one in ten employers perceive current delivery at the lowest level.

It is apparent there is some scope for improvement in current delivery if it is to meet employers' expectations of excellent VET. Across the aspects of course delivery, the area in which this may be more evident is relevance of course content, with one in ten (11%) viewing this as at level 4 while some 40% expect this level from an excellent provider. Also, relevance of course content (39%) had one of the highest proportions perceiving current delivery to be at level 2 (compared with around a quarter for most other course aspects). As noted above, relevance of course content was the most cited aspect as first priority for improvement in VET.

1.3 Comparisons between employer groups

Employers' general views on VET

Employers with recent VET graduate employees and employers without VET graduate employees were asked for their general views on VET, about the training practices, and related issues, in their organisation. Some comparative information is provided below.

Employers' general views on VET were obtained from their level of agreement with a series of statements posed to them during the interview. Responses, shown in table 1.1 below, generally indicated positive views on VET, although some areas were identified as needing improvement. Overall, the general views on VET were similar for those employers who had recent VET graduate employees and employers who had no VET graduate employees at all, although there were also some differences.

Table 1.1: Employers' views on VET, per cent who agree or strongly agree

Statements about VET	Employers with recent VET graduate employees	Employers with no VET graduate employees
It is more cost-effective to recruit trained people than to train people on the job	48	48
On-the-job skills are more useful than skills obtained through formal education	66	74
The VET system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs	69	41
Training pays for itself through increased worker productivity	74	68
The VET system needs to provide more practical job skills	77	79
Employers should have more input into course content	81	81
The VET system does not take into account the needs of employers	32	40
It is difficult to tell what a person can actually do from their educational qualifications	68	86
Qualifications should be based on what the person can actually do, rather than how many years of training they have completed	82	84
There should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training	85	86

On the positive side, most employers (74% and 68%) agreed that training pays for itself through increased worker productivity and around a third (32% and 40%) of employers believed that the VET system does not take into account the needs of employers. There appears to be an overall difference of opinion between the two groups of employer on whether the VET system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs, however, it should be noted that some 37% of employers with no VET graduate employees were unable to give a view on this.

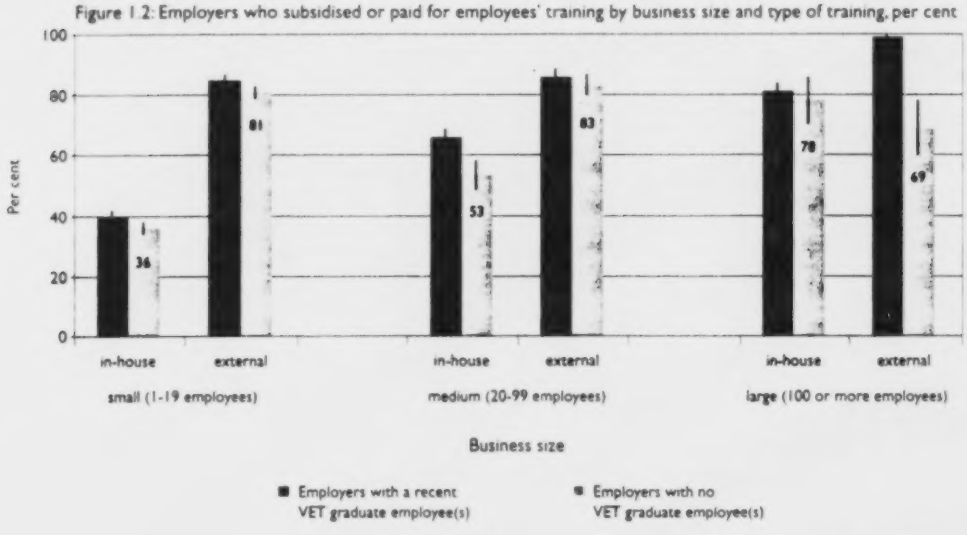
One area viewed less favourably by employers was that there should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training (85% and 86% respectively, for the two employer types, agreed with this). Another was that the VET system needs to provide more practical job skills, with at least three quarters (77% and 79%) of employers agreeing with this. A large proportion of employers (81% for both groups) felt that employers should have more input to course content.

Training practices and related issues

Employer provided training

Employers with recent VET graduates were more likely to have subsidised or paid for employees' training in the 12 months prior to the survey. Employers were asked about in-house training, that is, organised by the employer using their own staff or training consultants and they were asked about external training, that is, organised and conducted at venues outside the workplace by training or educational establishments, or private consultants. Both, employers with recent VET graduates and those without VET graduates, tended to provide more external training than in-house training. The employment size of the organisation was not a factor in the provision of external training, or in-house training.

Figure 1.2: Employers who subsidised or paid for employees' training by business size and type of training, per cent



In 1998, the Australian National Training Authority introduced a new approach to vocational education and training. Competencies, qualifications and assessment guidelines have been linked and combined in Training Packages. All employers in the survey who reported providing in-house training for their employees were asked whether any training was accredited and, if so, whether that training had been delivered using Training Packages.

Some two thirds (36%) of employers with recent VET graduates provided in-house training compared with around 16% of employers with no VET graduates. Of those who provided in-house training, delivery is shown in table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: Employers who provided in-house training, per cent.

	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
Accredited and delivered using Training Packages	24	9
Accredited and delivered not using Training Packages	15	21
Accredited and whether used Training Packages not known	7	6
Not accredited	54	65
Total in-house training	100	100

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Main reason for choosing TAFE or non-TAFE provider

Employers with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates were asked whether they would choose a TAFE or non-TAFE training provider for their employees if the providers were offering similar training. Approximately 42% of employers with recent VET graduates said they would be more likely to choose TAFE, some 34% said that it would depend, and around 20% said they would be more likely to choose a non-TAFE training provider. Just over a third of employers with no VET graduates (36%) said they would be more likely to choose TAFE while slightly more than one in ten (13%) would choose a non-TAFE training provider.

Table 1.3: Employers by choice of training provider, per cent

Choice of training provider	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
More likely to choose TAFE	42	36
More likely to choose non-TAFE training provider	20	13
It would depend	34	31
Can't say at this stage	4	19
Total	100	100

Of employers with recent VET graduates who said that they would choose TAFE rather than a non-TAFE training provider, around one in four (23%) gave their main reason as satisfactory past experience/previous dealings with TAFE. This was followed by around one in five (21%) who reported that recognition within the industry and recognition of qualifications was the main reason for their choice and reputation for competence/stability/experience (15%).

Similarly, around one in four employers (26%) with no VET graduates reported recognition within the industry as the main reason, and around one in five (19%) reported a reputation for competence/stability/experience. Satisfactory past experience/previous dealings was only indicated by 8% of employers, is likely a reflection of less contact with TAFE graduates by this group.

Main source of information on VET

Table 1.4, employers' main source of information about VET and skills development, shows both groups of employer have similar usage of industry associations with just over one in three employers (38% and 36%) reporting this as their main source.

TAFE was the main source of information for over a quarter of employers with recent VET graduates (28%) compared with around 12% of employers with no VET graduate employees. Employers with no VET graduate employees were more likely to have no main source, with just over a quarter (29%) reporting this.

Table 1.4: Main Source of information on VET and skills development, per cent

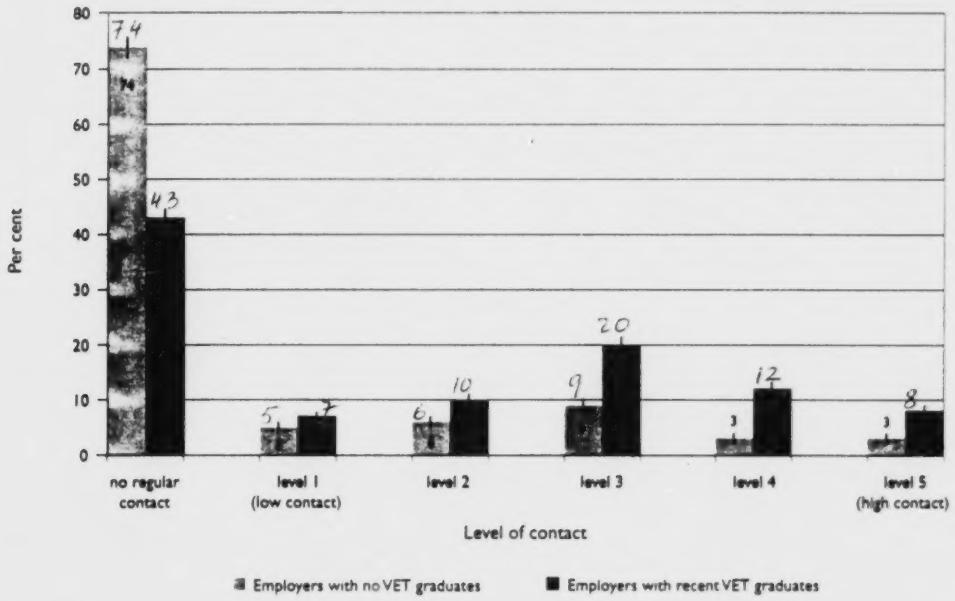
	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
TAFE	28	12
Government training departments/authorities	9	5
Industry associations	38	36
Other	9	18
No main source	16	29

Employer contact with training providers

Employers were asked whether they had regular contact with training providers and, if so, to rate their level of contact on a 5 point scale, where 1 equated to minimal contact, and 5 equated to a high level of contact.

As could be expected, employers with recent VET graduate employees were more likely to have regular contact with training providers, although, over a third (43%) reported not having regular contact. Just under three quarters (74%) of employers with no VET graduate employees reported having no regular contact, although similar (small) proportions of each of these two employer groups reported having some regular, but minimal, contact.

Figure 1.3: Employers' contact with TAFE colleges or other industry relevant training providers, per cent



Improvements in the training system

There were a variety of responses from employers in both groups when they were asked to make suggestions for improvements in the training system. Around two thirds (69%) of employers with recent VET graduates and slightly less than half (45%) of employers without VET graduates gave one or more suggestions for improvement. The means of improvement most frequently mentioned was that the training system must provide more practical and on-the-job training (15% of both groups of employer). This was followed by the suggestion that training must be specific and relevant to industry needs (11% and 8%). Employers with recent VET graduates also frequently mentioned they would like more input by industry into courses (10%).

These results support the findings on employers' general views on VET which show that the majority of employers with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates, felt there should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training, and that employers should have more input into course content.

1.4 Employers with no VET graduate employees

Employers with no VET graduate employees were asked the reasons their organisation did not employ any. Some employers gave more than one reason. Table 1.5 shows that almost half these employers believe VET qualifications are not relevant to their industry and just over a quarter feel they meet all their own training requirements in-house. Overall in the survey, approximately 16% of employers with no VET graduates provided some in-house courses for their employees and around 17% provided on-the-job training.

Table 1.5: Reasons for not employing VET graduates, per cent

These qualifications are not relevant to our industry (eg. Law Firm)	48
All our training requirements are provided in-house	27
Fully qualified people not required, staff attend only the modules relevant to our operations	15
Have staff currently studying for such qualifications	12
Not aware of training available to suit our requirements	4
We have not been happy with the quality of VET qualifications	2
Other	10
Don't know	4

Those employers with no VET graduates and who believe that VET qualifications are not relevant to their industry show an interesting picture across the industry groups. Industries which have traditionally high employment of VET graduates, such as Manufacturing, and Retail trade have around one in three such employers and the Construction industry, also high in VET graduate employment, has around one in four.

2. Introduction

This report presents the results from the 1999 National Survey of Employer Views on vocational education and training (VET). This survey was managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), with fieldwork being conducted under contract by ACNielsen Research. The survey was funded by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

This is the third survey of this nature, previous surveys having been conducted in 1995 and 1997. In the two earlier surveys, in-scope employers were defined as those with at least one employee who had completed a VET course of at least 200 hours within the two years prior to the survey (a recent VET graduate). This group was targeted again in the 1999 survey however, in addition, a sample of employers with no VET graduate employees was also surveyed.

The report generally refers to establishments found to be in-scope for the purpose of the survey as 'employers' or 'establishments'. Groups excluded as 'out of scope' were those self employed not employing staff, private households employing staff, foreign diplomatic missions and consulates in Australia, and defence force establishments.

A 'recent VET graduate' is defined as a person who has completed study, within the last two years, leading to a VET qualification gained through either:

- an apprenticeship or traineeship or
- a traineeship or
- a diploma, associate diploma or certificate course from a TAFE or a non-TAFE provider (excluding university qualification)

and requiring a minimum of one semester or 200 hours of training/study.

Each survey has been conducted by computer assisted telephone interview (CATI). The survey questionnaire for the 1997 and 1999 surveys has, for the most part, remained consistent, enabling comparisons between much of the data produced. Information for both groups of employers – those with and without a recent VET graduate employee - has been collected about their characteristics, general views on VET, training practices and their knowledge of VET. For employers with recent VET graduate employees, additional information has been collected about their views on the availability, relevance and quality of course delivery and graduates' skills.

The Survey of Employer Views on VET was a sample survey, covering employers in all States/Territories and in size categories of small, medium and large (Refer to Appendix 3 – Glossary of Terms). The report provides estimates of the results which would be found had all employers in Australia been interviewed. Because the employer survey estimates are based on information obtained from a sample of employers, an allowance for sampling variability should be made when using the results.

Comparisons have been made in this publication where they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Any figures which have a relative standard error greater than 25% have been marked with * because estimates with sampling variability of this magnitude are not reliable for most practical purposes. Confidence interval lines shown on the figures in this publication represent 95% confidence intervals and provide an indication of the variability associated with the estimate which has been produced. More information on standard errors and confidence interval lines is provided in Appendix 1 - Methodology and Appendix 2 – Standard Error Tables.

3 Employer characteristics

Overview

This section shows a profile of survey respondents, that is, employers with recent VET graduates and employers with no VET graduates, against basic business characteristics of employment size, main industry of operation and main State/Territory of operation. The estimated number of organisations employing recent VET graduates has steadily increased over the last five years. In 1995 the number was estimated to be 63,000, rising to approximately 104,000 in 1997 and up further in 1999, with some 117,000, employers with recent VET graduate employees. Type of industry does not appear to be a factor in the extent to which employers in each industry have recent VET graduates.

3.1 Employment size and State/Territory

Employers with recent VET graduates

The 1999 survey of employer views estimated there to be around 117,000 establishments employing people who had completed a vocational training qualification in the previous two years. Three-quarters of these establishments (or employers) were small businesses, defined for the purposes of this survey as those employing fewer than 20 employees, while 18% were medium (20-99 employees) and 7% were large (100 or more employees). This distribution is very close to the findings of the 1997 survey. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 provide a summary of the distribution by basic characteristics.

Table 3.1: Employers (establishments) with recent VET graduates, by State/Territory and size of business, number

	Estimated number of establishments with recent VET graduates ('000)			
	Small (1-19 employees) n=1,836	Medium (20-99 employees) n=1,101	Large (100 + employees) n=621	Total n=3,558
New South Wales	28.4	7.3	3.4	39.1
Victoria	21.3	4.9	1.3	27.5
Queensland	18.8	3.4	0.7	22.8
South Australia	7.5	1.6	0.5	9.6
Western Australia	7.7	2.7	1.2	11.7
Tasmania	2.2	0.9	0.2	3.2
Northern Territory	0.9	0.3	0.1	1.2
Australian Capital Territory	1.3	0.5	0.3	2.1
Australia	**88.1**	**21.5**	**7.7**	**117.3**

Table 3.2: Employers with recent VET graduates by size of business and State/Territory, per cent

Size of business	NSW n=696	Vic. n=557	Qld n=484	SA n=443	WA n=451	Tas. n=441	NT n=272	ACT n=214	Australia n=3,558
Small	73	77	82	78	66	67	74	62	75
Medium	19	18	15	17	23	27	21	22	18
Large	9	5	3*	5	11	6	5*	16	7
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Employers with no VET graduates

The 1999 survey of employer views estimated there were 222,400 employers with no VET graduate employees (recent or otherwise). The distribution was a little different from employers of recent VET graduates with around 87% of these employers being small in employment size, 12% were medium and around 1% were large employers. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 provide a summary of the distribution by basic characteristics.

Table 3.3: Employers (establishments) with no VET graduates by State/Territory and size of business, number

	Estimated number of establishments with no VET graduates ('000)			
	Small (1-19 employees) n=1,961	Medium (20-99 employees) n=433	Large (100 + employees) n=101	Total n=2,495
New South Wales	64.6	8.9	0.2	73.8
Victoria	48.7	3.3	0.5	52.5
Queensland	32.1	10.2	1.6	43.9
South Australia	17.3	0.9	0.2	18.3
Western Australia	20.1	1.8	0.2	22.1
Tasmania	5.2	0.7	–	6.0
Northern Territory	2.0	0.2	0.1	2.2
Australian Capital Territory	3.2	0.3	0.1	3.6
Australia	**193.3**	**26.3**	**2.9**	**222.4**

– Percentage rounds to zero

Table 3.4: Employers with no VET graduates by size of business and State/Territory, per cent

Size of business	NSW n=428	Vic. n=403	Qld n=350	SA n=322	WA n=322	Tas. n=292	NT n=181	ACT n=197	Australia n=2,495
Small	88	93	73	94	91	88	88	89	87
Medium	12	6	23	5	8	11	10	9	12
Large	–	1*	4*	1*	1*	1*	2*	2*	1
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

– Percentage rounds to zero

* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

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3.2 Industry

Employers with recent VET graduates

In 1999, among the industries with the highest proportions of employers with recent VET graduate employees were Retail trade (17%), Property and business services (12%), Health and community services (12%) and Manufacturing (11%). Employers in these four industries accounted for around half (52%) of all employers of recent VET graduates. In table 3.5, a comparison between 1997 and 1999 shows that with the exception of Manufacturing, the industries which had higher proportions of employers with VET graduates in 1997, generally declined in their overall share of employing recent VET graduates in 1999. The most noticeable decline occurred in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry in which employment of recent VET graduates declined from 11% in 1997 to 2% in 1999.

Table 3.5: Employers with recent VET graduates by industry per cent, 1997 and 1999

Industry category (ANZSIC)	1997	1999
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	11	2
Mining	–	1
Manufacturing	7	11
Electricity, gas and water supply	1	1
Construction	6	9
Wholesale trade	6	6
Retail trade	20	17
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	5	6
Transport and storage	3	3
Communication services	1	2
Finance and insurance	5	3
Property and business services	13	12
Government admin. & defence	2	1
Education	3	3
Health and community services	11	12
Cultural and recreational services	2	2
Personal and other services	5	9
Total	**100**	**100**

– Percentage rounds to zero

Comparison between the two employer groups

The extent to which different industries employ recent VET graduates is shown in table 3.6. Overall, it shows that employers with recent VET graduates are distributed across industries in a pattern similar to those with none. This also reflects the relative industry sizes, for example, Retail trade is among the industries with large employment and also has one of the highest proportions in both groups of employers in table 3.6.

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Table 3.6: Employers by industry, per cent

Industry category (ANZSIC)	Employers with: Recent VET graduates	No VET graduates
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	2	4
Mining	1	–
Manufacturing	11	10
Electricity, gas and water supply	1	–
Construction	9	7
Wholesale trade	6	8
Retail trade	17	21
Accommodation, cafes & restaurants	6	8
Transport and storage	3	4
Communication services	2	1
Finance and insurance	3	2
Property and business services	12	13
Government admin & defence	1	–
Education	3	3
Health and community services	12	12
Cultural and recreational services	2	2
Personal and other services	9	4
Total	**100**	**100**

– Percentage rounds to zero

4 Employer views on VET

Overview

Employers' views on vocational education and training in general were obtained from both employers with recent VET graduates and employers with no VET graduates through their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements posed to them during the interview. Between 1997 and 1999, the views on the value and relevance of vocational education and training in general held by employers with recent VET graduate employees have not changed greatly. Responses are generally positive although there are areas in which employers indicated they see a need for improvement.

Employers with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates were also asked whether they would choose a TAFE or non-TAFE training provider for their employees and whether they felt there was sufficient information available to enable them to make an effective choice. Just under half of employers with recent VET graduates said they would be more likely to choose TAFE, while around a third of employers with no VET graduates said they would be more likely to choose TAFE. Just over half of the employers in the survey felt they had sufficient information to make a choice of training provider.

Employers with no VET graduate employees gave reasons for not employing recent VET graduates and almost half these employers believe VET qualifications are not relevant to their industry, while a quarter believe they meet their training requirements in-house.

4.1 General perceptions

The statements posed to employers to ascertain their general views on VET focused on the areas of:

- qualifications compared with on-the job skills;
- provision of practical skills though VET;
- employers' needs; and
- value for money.

Table 4.1 shows the proportions of the two employer groups who agree or strongly agree with each of the statements in 1999 and also shows employers with recent VET graduates who agreed with the same statements in 1997.

On the positive side in 1999, most employers (74% and 68%) agreed that training pays for itself through increased worker productivity and around a third (32% and 40%) of employers believed that the VET system does not take into account the needs of employers. There appears to be an overall difference of opinion between the two groups of employer on whether the VET system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs, however, it should be noted that some 37% of employers with no VET graduate employees were unable to give a view on this.

One area viewed less favourably by employers was that there should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training (85% and 86% respectively, of the two employer types, agreed with this). Another was that employers should have more input to course content (81% of both groups). At least three quarters (77% and 79%) of employers agreed that the VET system needs to provide more practical job skills. However for employers with recent VET graduates this can be looked at in conjunction with the response to the statement the VET system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs (69% agree, 13% disagree) to gain further understanding of their views. A comparison of the results indicates that, while less than one in ten (6%) strongly agree that the VET system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs, around one in four (24%) strongly agree that the VET system needs to provide more practical job skills. It appears employers feel, to a degree, that the VET system is producing graduates with some of the skills employers need, although there is a considerable demand amongst employers for the VET system to produce graduates with skills more focused on practical workplace requirements.

Table 4.1: Employers who agree or strongly agree with each statement, per cent, 1997 and 1999

Statement	Employers with recent VET graduates		Employers with no VET graduates
	1997	1999	1999(a)
Qualifications			
On-the-job skills are more useful than skills obtained through formal vocational education	62	66	74
Qualifications should be based on what a person can actually do, rather than how many years of training they have completed	85	82	84
It is difficult to tell what a person can actually do from their educational qualifications	77	68	86
Practical skills			
The VET system needs to provide more practical job skills	75	77	79
There should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training	84	85	86
Employers' needs			
The VET system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs	65	69	41
Employers should have more input into course content	81	81	81
The VET system does not take into account the needs of employers	39	32	40
Value for money			
Training pays for itself through increased worker productivity	73	74	68
It is more cost-effective to recruit trained people than to train people on the job	51	48	48

(a) data not collected from employers with no VET graduate employees prior to 1999

Although over the two surveys, there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of employers with VET graduates holding the view that it is difficult to tell what a person can actually do from their educational qualification, some two thirds (68%) still agreed with this statement in 1999. By comparison, in 1999, employers with no VET graduates were less positive towards the value and relevance of vocational education and training and were more likely to hold this view (86%). They were also more likely (74%) than employers with VET graduates (66%) to feel that on-the-job skills are more useful than skills obtained through formal vocational training.

Industry

Over two thirds of the employers in the survey are concentrated in just a third of the industries. These industries, Retail trade, Property and business services, Health and community services, Manufacturing, Wholesale trade and Accommodation, cafes and restaurants combined, represent the views of at least two thirds of the employers in the survey, and therefore are the focus of table 4.2 below. Table 4.2 shows responses to the statements, highlighting those industries which have higher proportions of employers agreeing than the all industries average. It shows that, generally, across the statements, most of the six industries had proportions of employers agreeing which were approximately equal to or higher than the all industries average. This is the case for employers with recent VET graduates and employers with no VET graduates, although for any one

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statement, the industries vary slightly between the two employer groups. For example, for the statement on-the-job skills are more useful than skills obtained through formal vocational education, employers with recent VET graduates in Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (81%), Retail trade (74%), Property and business services (73%) and Manufacturing (69%) had proportions higher than the all industries average (66%) holding this view while proportions in Health and community services (53%) or Wholesale trade (51%) were lower. For the same statement, employers with no VET graduates also had proportions similar to, or higher than the all industries average (74%) holding this view in Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (91%), Manufacturing (79%) Retail trade and Wholesale trade (both 74%).

Table 4.2: Employers who agree or strongly agree with each statement by selected industries, per cent

Statement	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
Qualifications		
On-the-job skills are more useful than skills obtained through formal vocational education	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 81% Retail trade 74% Property and business services 73% Manufacturing 69% Health and community services 53% Wholesale trade 51% **All industries 66%**	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 91% Manufacturing 79% Retail trade 74% Wholesale trade 74% Property and business services 69% Health and community services 66% **All industries 74%**
It is difficult to tell what a person can actually do from their educational qualifications	Wholesale trade 83% Property and business services 77% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 73% Manufacturing 72% Retail trade 66% Health and community services 53% **All industries 68%**	Wholesale trade 93% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 92% Manufacturing 89% Retail trade 86% Health and community services 82% Property and business services 77% **All industries 86%**
Qualifications should be based on what a person can actually do, rather than how many years of training they have completed	Retail trade 89% Manufacturing 88% Property and business services 88% Wholesale trade 82% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 80% Health and community services 77% **All industries 82%**	Manufacturing 90% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 89% Retail trade 89% Wholesale trade 90% Health and community services 81% Property and business services 74% **All industries 84%**
Skills		
The VET system needs to provide more practical job skills	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 86% Health and community services 86% Property and business services 82% Retail trade 78% Manufacturing 73% Wholesale trade 60% **All industries 77%**	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 89% Wholesale trade 87% Retail trade 82% Health and community services 80% Manufacturing 77% Property and business services 74% **All industries 79%**
There should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 91% Manufacturing 87% Retail trade 87% Wholesale trade 86% Property and business services 84% Health and community services 82% **All industries 85%**	Wholesale trade 92% Retail trade 89% Health and community services 84% Manufacturing 82% Property and business services 80% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 78% **All industries 86%**

Table 4.2: Employers who agree, or strongly agree, with each statement, by selected industries, per cent (continued)

Statement	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
Employer needs		
The VET system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs	Wholesale trade 82% Health and community services 73% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 70% Property and business services 70% Retail trade 68% Manufacturing 64% **All industries 69%**	Retail trade 61% Property and business services 42% Manufacturing 39% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 35% Health and community services 32% Wholesale trade 16% **All industries 41%**
Employers should have more input into course content	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 95% Manufacturing 88% Health and community services 88% Property and business services 84% Retail trade 78% Wholesale trade 71% **All industries 81%**	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 92% Wholesale trade 92% Manufacturing 86% Health and community services 80% Retail trade 76% Property and business services 75% **All industries 81%**
The VET system does not take into account the needs of employers	Manufacturing 42% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 40% Property and business services 30% Retail trade 31% Health and community services 27% Wholesale trade 24% **All industries 32%**	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 67% Retail trade 44% Manufacturing 41% Wholesale trade 37% Health and community services 27% Property and business services 27% **All industries 40%**
Value for money		
It is more cost-effective to recruit trained people than to train people on the job	Wholesale trade 66% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 56% Property and business services 54% Manufacturing 50% Health and community services 40% Retail trade 33% **All industries 48%**	Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 60% Property and business services 61% Manufacturing 56% Health and community services 46% Retail trade 46% Wholesale trade 23% **All industries 48%**
Training pays for itself through increased worker productivity	Retail trade 79% Health and community services 77% Wholesale trade 72% Property and business services 71 % Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 68% Manufacturing 65% **All industries 74%**	Health and community services 73% Property and business services 72% Manufacturing 69% Retail trade 67% Wholesale trade 60% Accommodation, cafes & restaurants 49% **All industries 68%**

For all three statements which relate to qualifications, the industry of Health and community services has, for both groups of employer, proportions agreeing which are below the all industries average. This indicates that, in this industry, qualifications are perceived as important and this can also be seen in the higher proportion of this industry agreeing that training pays for itself through increased worker productivity (77% and 73% for the two employer groups). However, employers with no VET graduates in Accommodation, cafes and restaurants appear less certain of the value of qualifications with some nine in ten agreeing with the three statements relating to qualifications. This is also seen in the proportion agreeing that training pays for itself through increased worker productivity (49%) being below the all industries average of 68%.

Other differences between the two groups of employer can be seen in Wholesale trade and the proportion of employers who agree that it is more cost-effective to recruit trained people than to train people on the job. Some two thirds (66%) of employers with a recent VET graduate agreed with this statement compared with approximately a quarter (23%) of employers with no VET graduates and the all industries average of 48% for each employer group. In relation to the statements relating to provision of practical skills through VET, employers with recent VET graduates in the Accommodation, cafes and restaurants industry were more likely to agree with these statements, indicating they see a need for some improvement.

4.2 Choice of training provider

Employers with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates were asked whether they would choose a TAFE or non-TAFE training provider for their employees if the provider were offering similar training. Table 4.3 shows that approximately 42% of employers with recent VET graduates said they would be more likely to choose TAFE, some 34% said that it would depend, and around 20% said they would be more likely to choose a non-TAFE training provider. Just over a third of employers with no VET graduates (36%) said they would be more likely to choose TAFE while slightly more than one in ten (13%) would choose a non-TAFE training provider.

Table 4.3: Employers by choice of training provider, per cent

Choice of training provider	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
More likely to choose TAFE	42	36
More likely to choose non-TAFE training provider	20	13
It would depend	34	31
Can't say at this stage	4	19
Total	100	100

Size of business did not appear to be a factor in whether employers with recent VET graduates were more likely to choose TAFE, with some 43% of small employers, 42% of medium and 38% of large employers reporting that they would choose TAFE. However, medium (30%) and large businesses (29%) were more likely than small businesses (17%) to choose non-TAFE providers. For employers with no VET graduates, similar proportions of small (36%) and medium (41%) employers reported they would choose TAFE or reported they would choose non-TAFE (13% and 18% respectively). Large employers were less likely to choose TAFE (16%) and were more likely to report that their decision would depend (67%) on some factor(s). For both groups of employer in the survey (those with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates) their choice of provider at a state/territory level was very similar to the distribution at a national level.

Support for TAFE between industry sectors varied. Employers with recent VET graduates and in Communication services were more likely to choose TAFE (83%), followed by Wholesale trade (56%). Industries in which these employers were less likely to choose TAFE were Education (23%), and Health and community services (29%). Employers with recent VET graduates and who would choose a non-TAFE provider were more likely be in Retail trade (41%) followed by Personal and other services (30%).

Employers with no VET graduates and who would choose a TAFE provider were more likely to be in Electricity, gas and water supply (77%) or Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (69%) and less likely to be in Government administration and defence (9%) or Transport and storage (16%).

Table 4.4 compares the type of training undertaken by graduate employees and the training provider preferences of employers with recent VET graduates. Employers who had one or more graduates of apprenticeship training, were more likely to choose TAFE (44%) than non-TAFE (23%). Of employers who had graduates from traineeships, the proportions of employers likely to choose a non-TAFE provider than a TAFE provider were similar (35% and 30 % respectively).

Table 4.4: Employers with recent VET graduates choice of main training provider by type of course, per cent

Type of training undertaken	More likely to choose TAFE provider	More likely to choose non-TAFE provider	It would depend on other factors	Total (a)
Apprenticeship	44	23	29	100
Traineeship	30	35	30	100
Certificate or diploma	43	20	34	100
Other VET course	25	24	42	100

(a) Includes can't say responses

Main reason for choosing TAFE or non-TAFE provider

Table 4.5 shows employers' reasons for their choice of training provider. Of employers with recent VET graduates who said that they would choose TAFE rather than a non-TAFE training provider, around one in four (23%) gave their main reason as satisfactory past experience/previous dealings with TAFE. This was followed by around one in five (21%) who reported that recognition within the industry and recognition of qualifications was the main reason for their choice and reputation for competence/stability/experience (15%).

Similarly, around one in four employers (26%) with no VET graduates reported recognition within the industry as the main reason, and around one in five (19%) reported a reputation for competence/stability/experience. Satisfactory past experience/previous dealings was only indicated by 8% of employers, and is likely a reflection of less contact with TAFE graduates by this group.

Table 4.5: Employers' choice of training provider by main reason, per cent

	Employers with **recent VET** graduates		Employers with **no VET** graduates	
Main reason	Choose **TAFE** rather than non-TAFE provider	Choose **non-TAFE** rather than TAFE provider	Choose **TAFE** rather than non-TAFE provider	Choose **non-TAFE** rather than TAFE provider
Credibility, acceptance	9	–	13	–
Recognition within the industry, recognition of qualification	21	18	26	11
Effective training programs, good standards	9	9	10	11
Reputation for competency, stability, experience	15	6	19	4*
More flexible timetable to suit employment	2	11	–	14
Courses more tailored to needs of workplace	4	30	3	30
Offer better service	2	15	4	10
Offer hands on experience	1*	3	2	9
Satisfactory past experience previous dealings	23	7	8	3*
Cheaper, value for money, economical	5	0	7	0
Location, access	4	0	2*	0
Other	6	2*	3	4*
Can't say	1*	–	2*	3*
Total	100	100	100	100

– Percentage rounds to zero
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Of employers who said they would choose a non-TAFE provider, approximately 30% in both employer groups reported their main reason to be the course being more tailored to needs of the workplace. For employers with recent VET graduates, this was followed by recognition within industry/recognition of qualification (18%) and they offer better service (15%). For employers with no VET graduates, it was followed by more flexible timetable to suit employment (14%).

Factors affecting choice

Around one in three employers in both groups (employers with recent VET graduates 34%, and those with no VET graduates, 31%) did not make a choice between a TAFE or non-TAFE training provider but instead, said their choice would depend on particular factors and these are shown in table 4.6.

Employers with recent VET graduates

Small employers were more likely to say their choice would depend on particular factors (36%) than medium (25%) sized employers.

Of the States and Territories, those with employers more likely not to nominate a choice between TAFE and non-TAFE were Victoria (38%) and the Australian Capital Territory (41%). Employers in the Australian Capital Territory were also less likely to choose TAFE as their training provider.

Industries in which employers were more likely to say that their choice of TAFE or non-TAFE training provider would depend were Health and community services (55%), and Mining (54%). Industries less likely to say it would depend were Communication services (10%) and Retail trade (18%).

Table 4.6: Employers whose choice of provider would depend on particular factors, per cent

Factor	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
Cost	38	27
Quality of the course	48	30
Quality of the teacher	12	12
Type of course	29	42
Reputation of course	15	11
Accreditation	13	11
Location/accessibility	9	8
Time (length of course/ time away from job/ flexibility of times)	11	4
Course content/relevance	10	5
Other	4	7
Can't Say	1	9

When asked on what factors their choice of provider would depend, the reasons cited most frequently by employers were quality of the course (48%), cost (38%) and course type (29%). (Employers were allowed to nominate more than one reason).

Large employers with a recent VET graduate were more likely to report that their choice would depend on cost. Some 61% of large employers nominated cost as a factor, compared with 44% of medium employers and 35% of small employers. In contrast, around 11% of large businesses with no VET graduates cited that cost would be a factor in their choice of provider.

At a State/Territory level, course quality was the most frequently given reason by employers in all jurisdictions except Queensland. In Queensland, around 17% of employers cited course quality as a factor in their choice of provider while other jurisdictions ranged from 63% of employers in Western Australia to 37% in the Northern Territory. Cost was given by 24% of employers in Queensland while the other jurisdictions ranged from 45% in New South Wales to 33% in South Australia.

Employers with no VET graduates

Employers with no VET graduates were a little different from employers with recent VET graduates when size of business is considered. Large sized employers were more likely to say their choice would depend on particular factors (67%) than medium (26%) or small (31%). Large employers with no VET graduates were also less likely to consider cost a factor in their choice of provider (11%) than large employers with recent VET graduates (61%).

Of the States and Territories, cost and quality of the course were the most frequently cited factors influencing employers' choice of provider. In all jurisdictions, these two factors were reported by similar proportions of employers within each jurisdiction, except South Australia and Tasmania. In these two States, employers were more likely to report quality of course (30% in South Australia and 52% in Tasmania) than cost (15% in both South Australia and Tasmania).

Among the industries in which employers with no VET graduates were more likely to consider particular factors in making their choice of training provider were Health and community services (48%) Transport and storage (46%) and Finance and insurance (44%). Industries less likely to consider other factors before making a choice of provider include Electricity, gas and water supply (5%) and Government administration and defence (11%).

Availability of information about training providers

Employers in both groups (those with recent VET graduates and with no VET graduates) were asked whether they felt there was sufficient information available to enable them to make an effective choice of training provider and course for their employees, apprentices or trainees. Over half (55%) of all employers in the survey felt they had sufficient information to make a choice of training provider. Employers with recent VET graduates (61%) were more likely to report this than employers with no VET graduates (52%).

For employers with recent VET graduates, around three quarters (78%) of large employers reported having sufficient information, compared with around two thirds (64%) of medium employers and over half (59%) of small employers. For employers with no VET graduate employees the response pattern was around half of large employers (52%) and small employers (51%) and slightly more for medium size employers (60%).

Across jurisdictions, there was little difference in the perceptions of availability of information by employers with recent VET graduates. Around two thirds of employers in Queensland (69%), the Northern Territory (69%) and Tasmania (65%) reported that they had enough information. This was followed closely by Western Australia and Victoria (61% each), South Australia and Australian Capital Territory (60% each) and New South Wales (56%). The pattern was similar for employers with no VET graduates except that, overall, they were less likely to report having sufficient information, with the range being from some 60% of employers in Queensland to around 40% of employers in the Australian Capital Territory.

A relatively high percentage of employers with recent VET graduates from Communication services (84%), Personal and other services (79%) and Finance and insurance (77%) said they had sufficient information to make an effective choice. Industries in which around half of employers reported having sufficient information were Manufacturing, Construction, and Health and community services (50% each).

For employers with no VET graduate employees from Electricity, gas and water supply (99%), Health and community services (68%), Education (65%) and Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (56%) higher proportions said they had sufficient information to make an effective choice. Industries in which less than half of employers reported having sufficient information were Government, administration and defence (35%), Transport and storage (41%) and Construction (45%).

Employers who felt they currently did not have enough information to make a choice of training provider and course (37% of employers in the survey), were asked what additional information they needed to make an effective choice. There was a wide variety of responses to this question and these are summarised below.

Table 4.7: Employers by whether need additional information to make effective choice of training provider, per cent

Type of additional information needed	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
No additional information needed	61	52
Additional information needed	36	38
Additional information needed on:		
What courses are available	49	54
Content of course or analysis of course content	44	43
Accreditation or directory of accredited courses	8	4
Qualifications and credibility of trainers	12	9
Facilities for hands-on or practical training	7	5
Funding options or subsidies available or cost of courses	7	6
More current information	37	23
Ability to meet industry requirements or needs	12	14
Structure of course - length, timing, location	8	1*
Other issues	3	2

* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

The most frequently mentioned type of additional information needed was information on courses available - 49% for employers with recent VET graduates and 54% of employers with no VET graduates. Course content and availability of more current information were also mentioned by large proportions of employers in both groups.

Of those industries in which a higher proportion of employers with recent VET graduates felt they had insufficient information to make a choice, employers tended to need more information on course content - Mining (85%), Agriculture, forestry and fishing (78%) and Electricity, gas and water supply (80%). Information on courses available was more likely to be mentioned by the Agriculture (87%), Electricity, gas and water supply (81%), and Communication services (78%) industries.

High proportions of employers with no VET graduates also reported that they felt they needed more information on course content (66% in Electricity gas, and water supply and 61% in Retail trade). However, as can be seen in table 4.7, they were more likely to feel they needed more information on what courses are available (54%) and the industries more likely to report this include Government administration and defence (89%) and Wholesale trade (76%).

4.3 Reasons for not having VET graduate employees

Employers with no VET graduate employees gave reasons for not employing VET graduates. Table 4.8 shows that almost half these employers believe VET qualifications are not relevant to their industry and just over one quarter indicated their training requirements are provided in-house. Of employers with no VET graduates who provided some form of training, 41% provided in-house training and it becomes more likely as the business increases in size (small 36%, medium 53%, large 78%). However, across all employers with no VET graduates, less than one in five (16%) provided in-house courses and on the job training (17%).

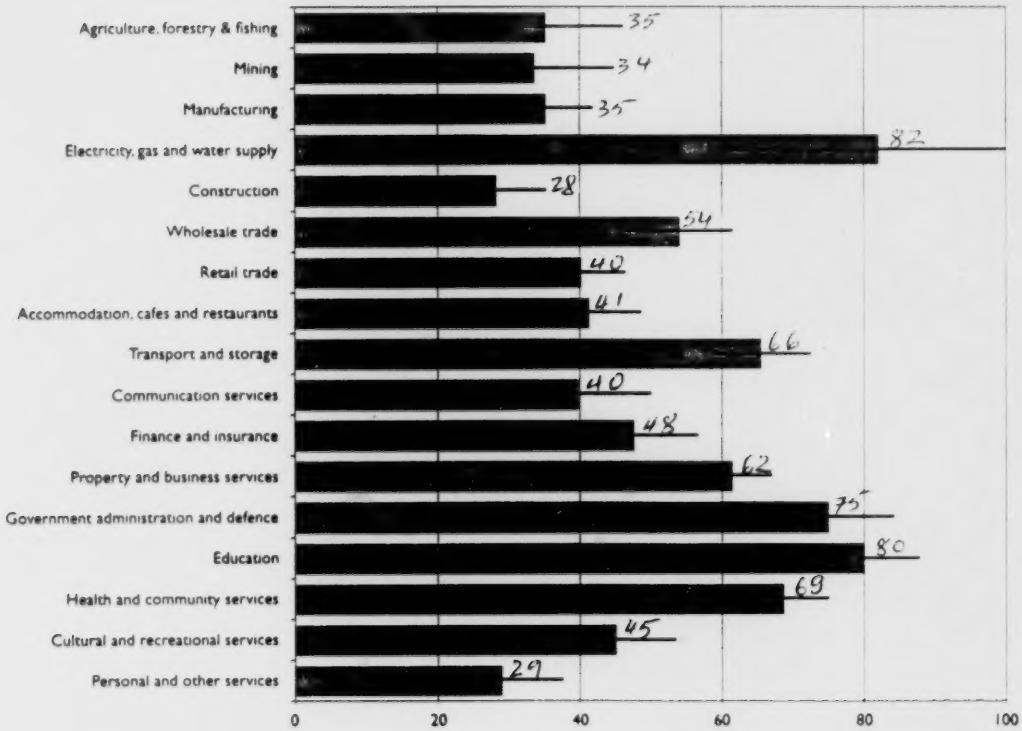
Table 4.8: Employers with no VET graduates by reasons organisation does not have VET graduate employees, per cent

Reasons for not employing recent VET graduates	
These qualifications are not relevant to our industry	48
All our training requirements are provided in-house	27
Fully qualified people not required, staff attend only the modules relevant	15
Have staff currently studying for such qualifications	12
Not aware of training available to suit our requirements	4
We have not been happy with the quality of VET qualifications	2
Other reasons	10

Industry

As can be seen in figure 4.1, those employers with no VET graduates and who believe that VET qualifications are not relevant to their industry show an interesting picture across the industry groups. Industries which have traditionally high employment of VET graduates, such as Manufacturing, and Retail trade have around one in three such employers and the Construction industry, also high in VET graduate employment, has around one in four.

Figure 4.1: Employers who reported that VET qualifications are not relevant to their industry as a reason they do not have VET graduates by industry, per cent.



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5 Employers with recent VET graduates

Overview

Employers were asked for the type of training provider from which their graduates received their training. A little over two thirds of employers reported that all or most of their recent VET graduates had trained at a TAFE, and around a quarter reported having all or mostly non-TAFE trained graduates. This shows a shift since 1997 in the type of institution at which graduates have received their training. The shift shows a larger proportion of employers in 1999 with graduates who received training with a private provider rather than a TAFE.

Overall satisfaction with the performance of VET providers was rated by employers on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being 'Very dissatisfied' and 10 being 'Very satisfied'. Employers who had all or mostly TAFE graduates were asked to give a rating of their experience with TAFE, and similarly, employers with all or mostly graduates from non-TAFE training providers were asked to give a rating for that provider type. Overall satisfaction with the VET sector was generally high in 1999 with 83% of employers of VET graduates reporting being satisfied (giving a rating of 6 and above), compared with 78% in 1997. Satisfaction was high for employers of all sizes, however, medium employers (84%) and small employers (83%) were more likely to report being satisfied than large employers (74%).

As noted earlier in this report, the 1999 survey focuses on the difference between those employers with direct experience of vocational education and training and others. Employers with recent VET graduates were divided into two groups based on whether they had contact with these graduates during their course. This was determined by whether the graduate(s) had completed their training course before, or after, they commenced their current employment. Employers with at least one graduate who completed their course after commencing employment with them, were asked for their views on the training course(s) and graduates' skills. Employers who had no graduates who completed their course after being employed with them were asked for their views on their graduates' skills, only.

In 1999 course information was collected from a different population of employers from that of the 1997 survey, while information about graduates' skills was collected from the same population. Because of this, comparisons between data for the two surveys can only be made for information about graduates' skills.

For each aspect of VET delivery, employers were asked for their views on the level of current delivery and the level of delivery they would reasonably expect from an excellent VET provider. In order to do this, they were provided with descriptions of four levels (level four being the highest) of delivery from which to choose. Although the four levels for each of the aspects are not related to a single scale (ie they are not directly comparable), some general observations can be made about employers' views across these areas of VET delivery.

Overall, across the different aspects of delivery, employers of recent VET graduates have a positive view of the current level of VET delivery. At a very broad view, perceptions of employers were:

- around two in three employers perceive current course delivery as being in the top two levels;
- with the exception of 'value for money', around three in four employers perceive current skills of graduates as being in the top two levels;
- around two in three employers perceive value for money as being in the top two levels;
- across all aspects, less than one in ten employers perceive current delivery at level one.

The difference between the level of current delivery and expectations of excellence is described as the "gap" in level of service. (see Appendix 1 - 'The gap' in level of service.)

5.1 Types and numbers of graduates

Approximately 29% of employers with recent VET graduates reported that all their graduates had completed their courses **before** taking up their current employment. The remaining employers (71%) reported that they had at least one recent VET graduate who had completed their training **after** taking up their current employment. Employers in this latter group may have had a mix of graduates who completed their training before and who completed training after commencing their current employment.

Table 5.1 shows the employer groups by industry. Among the industries more likely to have graduates who had completed their VET qualification before taking up their current employment were Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (45%), Property and business services (43%), and Health and community services (35%). Among the industries more likely to have employers with one or more graduates who completed their VET qualification after taking up their current employment were Government administration and defence (96%), Communication services (93%), and Finance and insurance (88%).

Table 5.1: Employers with recent VET graduates who graduated before and after commencing their current employment by industry, per cent

Industry group (ANZSIC)	Employers with only employees who graduated **before** starting their current employment	Employers with employees who graduated **after** starting their current employment (a)
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	18*	82
Mining	14*	86
Manufacturing	29	71
Electricity, gas and water supply	26*	74
Construction	17	83
Wholesale trade	18	82
Retail trade	26	74
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	45	55
Transport and storage	26	74
Communication services	7*	93
Finance and insurance	12	88
Property and business services	43	57
Government administration and defence	4*	96
Education	21	79
Health and community services	35	65
Cultural and recreational services	29	71
Personal and other services	34	66
Total	**29**	**71**

(a) Also includes employers with both groups of graduates – those graduating before starting work with the employer and those graduating after starting work with the employer.

* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

5.2 Type of training graduates received

Type of course

Different industries have different patterns of vocational training undertaken by their recently graduated employees. As table 5.2 shows, among establishments with recent VET graduates, apprenticeships are more commonly found in the Construction 71% , Electricity gas and water supply (63%) and Manufacturing (60%) industries. Few establishments (around 7% or less) in the Property and business services, Cultural and recreational services, Communication services, Finance and insurance, Education and Health and community services industries had employees who had recently completed an apprenticeship. Overall, 31% of employers indicated that, of their employees who had completed a VET qualification in the past two years, one or more had undertaken an apprenticeship.

Overall, 13% of employers reported having employees who had recently completed a traineeship. This pattern was more common in the Finance and insurance, Transport and storage industries (both 27%), and Government administration and defence (26%).

Nearly two thirds (63%) of employers reported having employees who had recently completed a VET certificate or diploma. This pattern was more common in Communication services (94%), Education (92%) Finance and insurance (89%) and Wholesale trade (84%). Employees with recently acquired vocational certificates/diplomas were less frequently reported by establishments in the Construction (32%), Manufacturing (37%) and Electricity, gas and water supply (41%) industries.

Table 5.2: Employers with recent VET graduates by type of training undertaken by graduates by industry, per cent

Percent of employers with employees who have undertaken:

	Certificate/diploma	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	Other
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	57	15*	26	7*
Mining	67	38	1*	0
Manufacturing	37	60	14	-
Electricity, gas and water supply	41	63	8*	1*
Construction	32	71	3*	5*
Wholesale trade	84	12	7*	-
Retail trade	58	41	22	1*
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	63	25	19	9
Transport and storage	81	16	27	3*
Communication services	94	3*	5*	1*
Finance and insurance	89	0	27	4*
Property and business services	80	7	11	4
Government administration and defence	66	37	26	1*
Education	92	3*	8*	-
Health and community services	83	2*	10	-
Cultural and recreational services	76	6*	17	6*
Personal and other services	47	54	4*	2*
Total	**63**	**31**	**13**	**2**

- Percentage rounds to zero

* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Type of provider

Figure 5.1: Employers by type of training provider, per cent

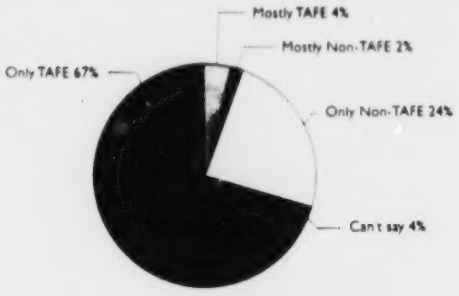


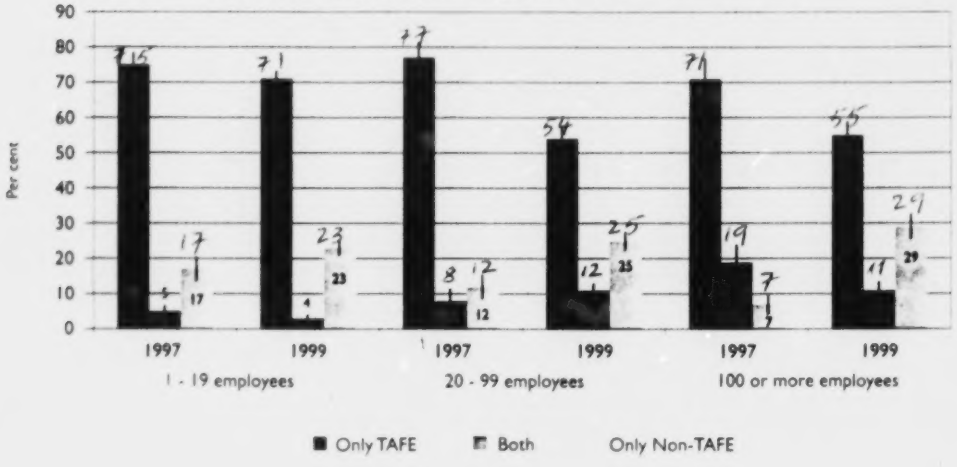
Figure 5.1 summarises the type of provider from which graduates received their training. Around three quarters (73%) of employers indicated that at least one of their recent VET graduates had trained at a TAFE. These comprised 67% with only TAFE-trained graduates, 4% with mainly TAFE-trained graduates, and 2% with some TAFE-trained graduates but mostly non-TAFE trained.

Just under a third (30%) of employers indicated that at least one of their recent VET graduates had been trained by a non-TAFE training provider. These comprised 24% with non-TAFE graduates, 2% with mainly non-TAFE graduates, and 4% with some non-TAFE graduates but mostly TAFE trained.

Employment size

The pattern of employing recent graduates from TAFE and/or non-TAFE training providers has changed between 1997 and 1999. Figure 5.2 shows that in 1997, smaller employers were more likely to report having all recent VET graduates who were non-TAFE (17%) compared with medium (12%) and large employers (7%). However, in 1999, large employers were more likely to report having all recent VET graduates who were non-TAFE trained, showing a shift in the type of institution at which graduates have received their training towards private providers rather than TAFE. The extent of this shift varies across organisational size. Organisations with a small employment size show little change in graduates' training provider type. However, compared with 1997, there are smaller proportions of medium and large employment sized organisations with graduates from only TAFE and a growth in the proportions with only non-TAFE trained graduates. For example, in 1997 some three quarters (77%) of medium sized organisations had only TAFE graduates and this declined to a little over half (54%) with only TAFE graduates in 1999. From 1997 to 1999, the number of large organisations with only non-TAFE graduates rose from less than one in ten (7%) to more than one in four (29%).

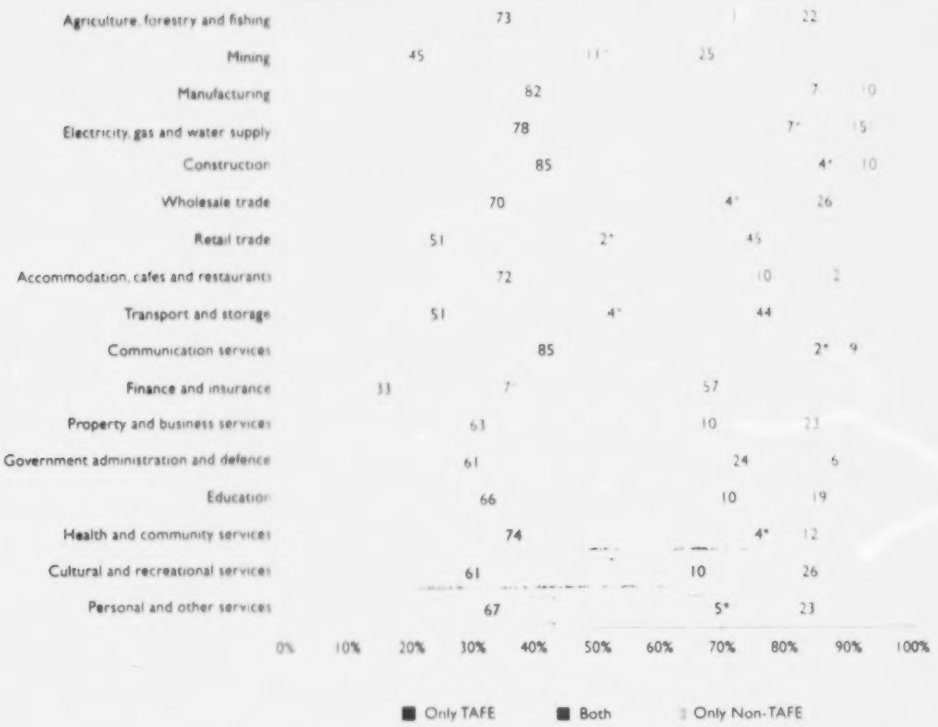
Figure 5.2: Employers by size by type of training provider, per cent



Industry

A majority of employers in all industries reported that most of their recent VET graduates had been trained by TAFE, although the proportion varies across industries. As figure 5.3 indicates, employers in the Finance and insurance industry were least likely to employ only TAFE-trained graduates (33%) and most likely to employ only non-TAFE trained graduates (57%). The Construction and Communication services industries were among those with the highest proportions of only TAFE-trained graduates (both with 85%).

Figure 5.3: Employers by industry by type of training provider, per cent (a)



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution
(a) Excludes can't say

5.3 Overall satisfaction with the VET sector

Overall satisfaction with the performance of vocational education and training providers, including both TAFE and non-TAFE training providers, was rated by employers on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being 'Very dissatisfied' and 10 being 'Very satisfied'. Employers who had all or mostly TAFE graduates were asked to give a rating of their experience with TAFE, and similarly, employers with all or mostly graduates from non-TAFE training providers were asked to give a rating for that provider type. These ratings have been combined to produce results for the VET sector as a whole. Employers who gave VET an overall rating of 6 and above on the scale were said to be satisfied. These overall ratings for the VET sector are shown below for employer size, State/Territory and industry. Results are presented both as mean scores and as percentages.

Some highlights of this section include:

- overall satisfaction with the VET sector was generally high. In 1999, 83% of employers of VET graduates, compared with 78% in 1997, gave a score of 6 or more out of 10 as a measure of their satisfaction with VET; and

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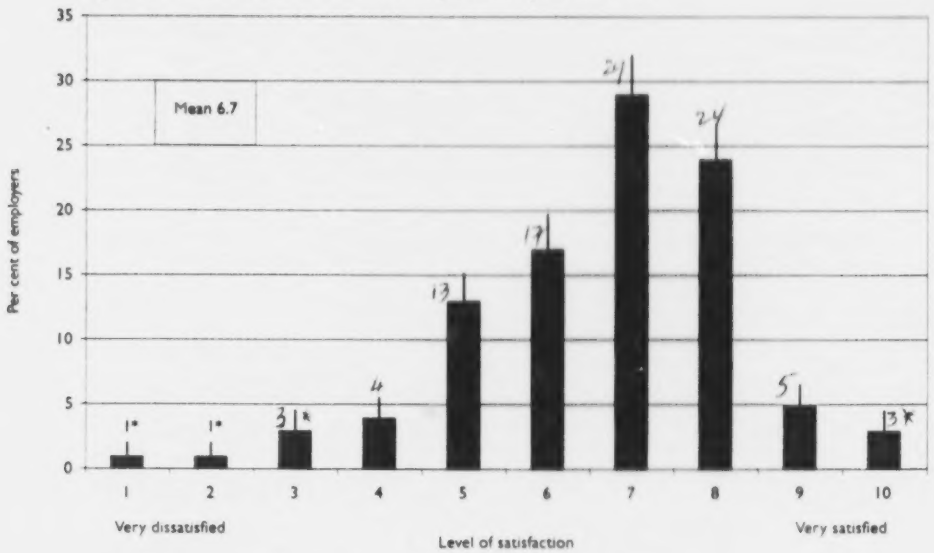
- high satisfaction levels were expressed in some industries. In particular, the industries of Agriculture, forestry and fishing (94%), Mining (91%), Government administration and defence (91%), and Transport and storage (90%).

Employers' mean satisfaction rating with VET training providers was 7.2 on a scale of 1 to 10 which can be seen in figure 5.5. In figure 5.6 there is virtually no difference in mean ratings between large, medium and small employers, however when the individual ratings on a scale of 1 to 10 are examined on a percentage basis some differences are apparent, as seen in figure 5.7. In particular, the proportion of employers satisfied with VET training providers (giving a rating of between 6 and 10) was slightly lower among large employers (74%) than medium (84%) and small employers (83%). Also, large employers were more likely to concentrate their ratings around 6 and 7.

Figure 5.4: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, per cent, 1997



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Figure 5.5: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, per cent, 1999

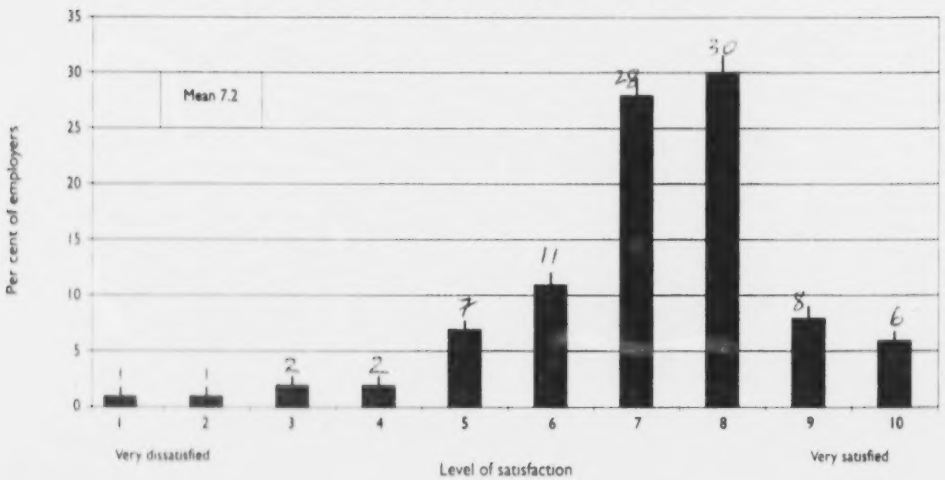


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Figure 5.6: Mean score for overall satisfaction with VET providers by employer size

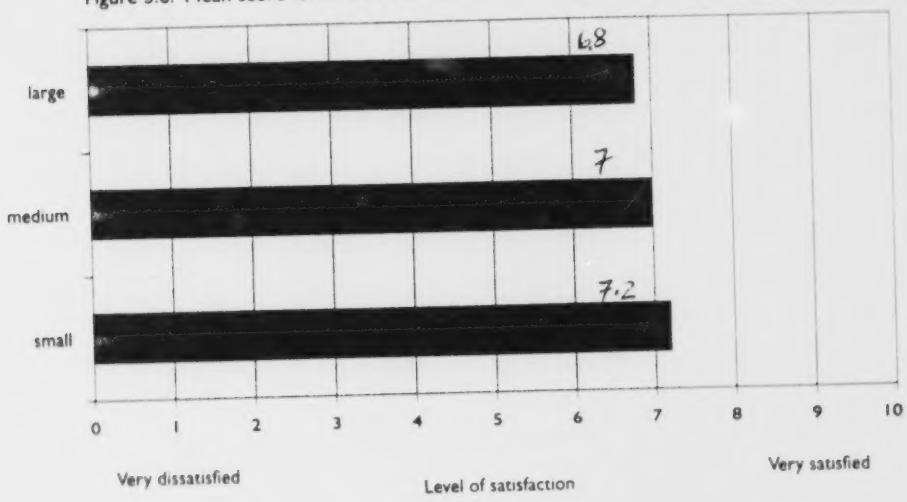
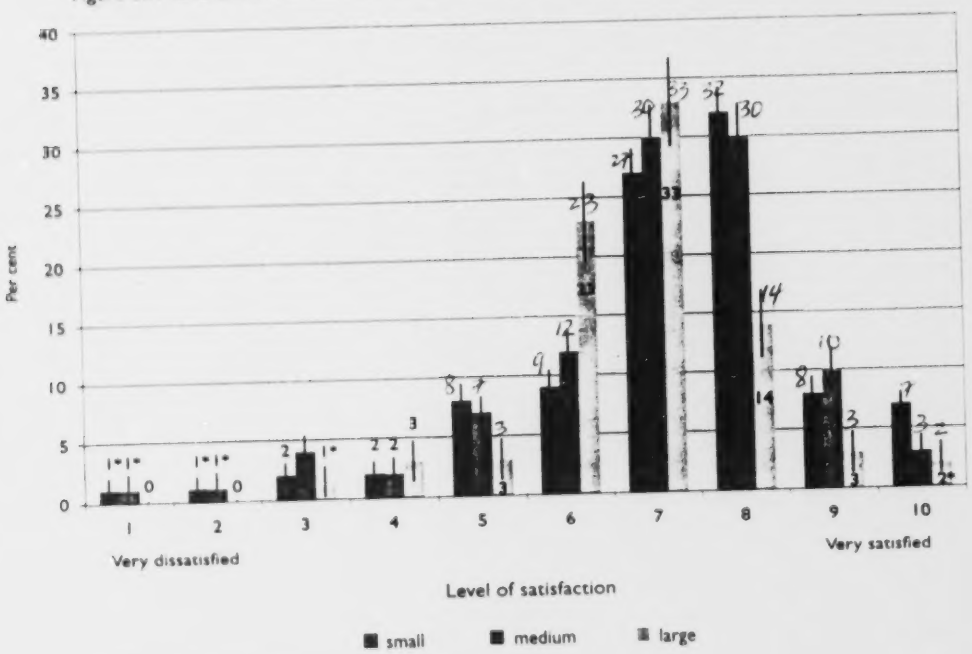


Figure 5.7: Overall satisfaction with VET providers by employer size, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

On a State by State basis, differences in overall satisfaction with VET training providers were apparent. Satisfaction was higher among New South Wales and South Australian employers of a recent VET graduate (mean rating of 7.3) and was lower among Tasmanian employers (mean rating of 6.7). Means in other States/Territories were in the range 7.0-7.1.

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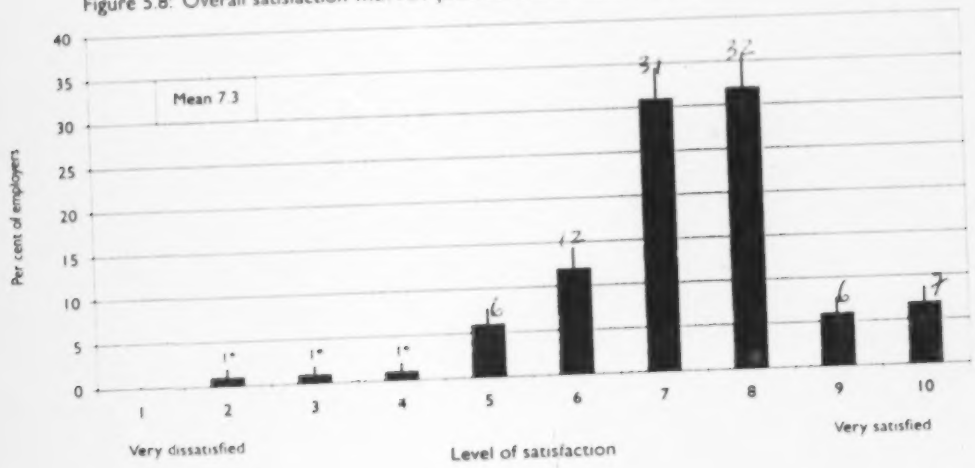
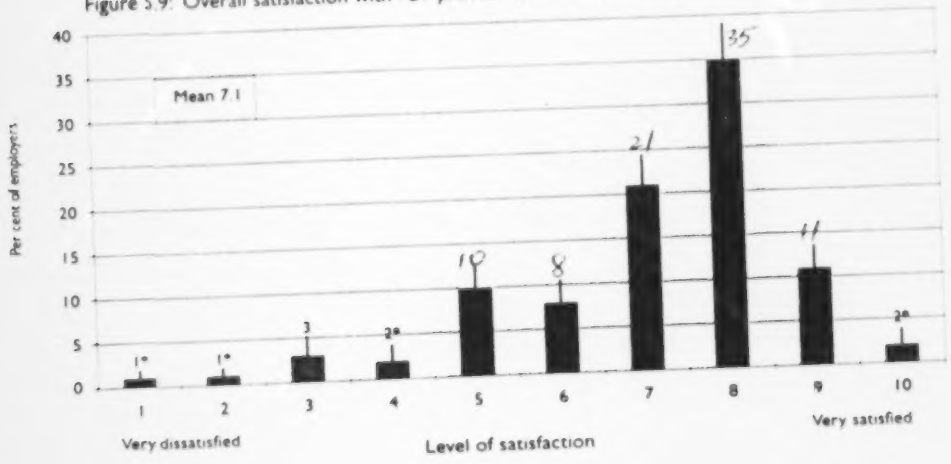
In terms of percentages, figures 5.8 to 5.15 indicate that around one in ten employers of a recent VET graduate in Tasmania (11%), Queensland and Western Australia (9% each) rated their satisfaction with VET providers at 4 or below, compared with 3% of New South Wales employers. In all States/Territories, the most frequent rating of satisfaction was 7 and 8.

Figure 5.8: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, New South Wales, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Figure 5.9: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, Victoria, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

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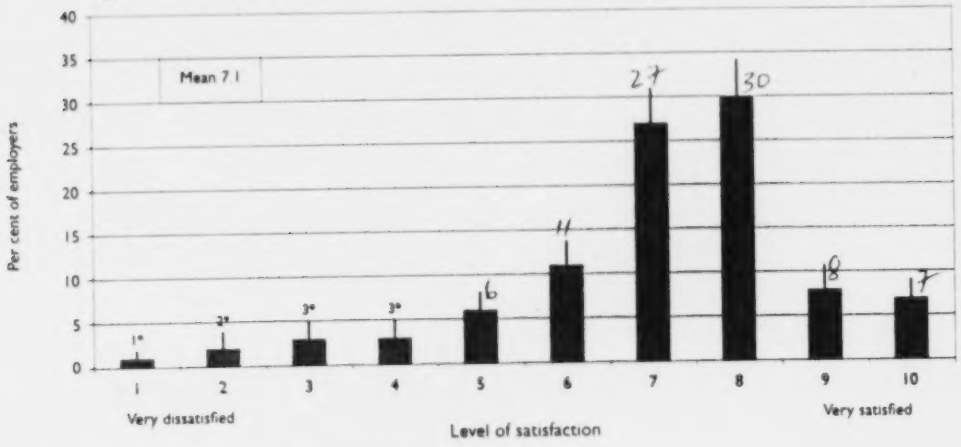
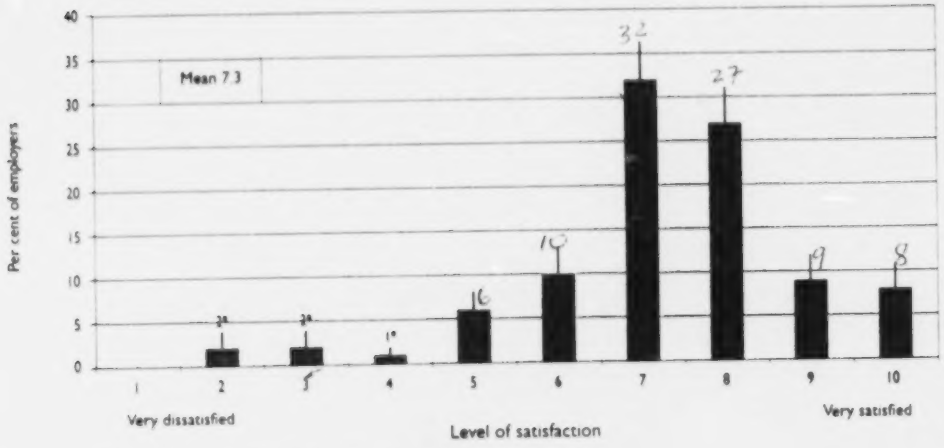
Figure 5.10: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, Queensland, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Figure 5.11: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, South Australia, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

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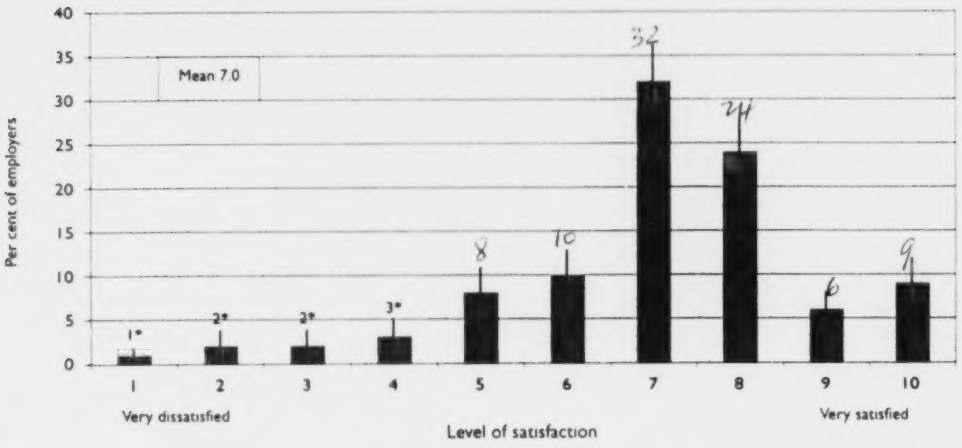
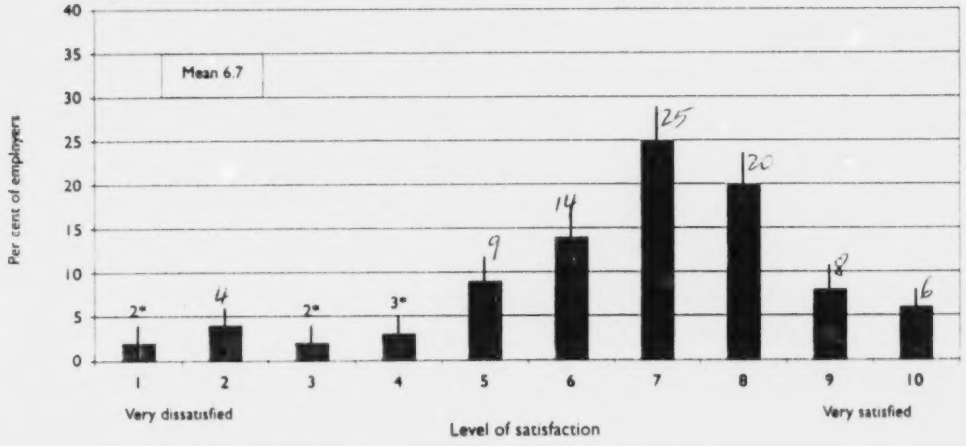
Figure 5.12: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, Western Australia, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Figure 5.13: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, Tasmania, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

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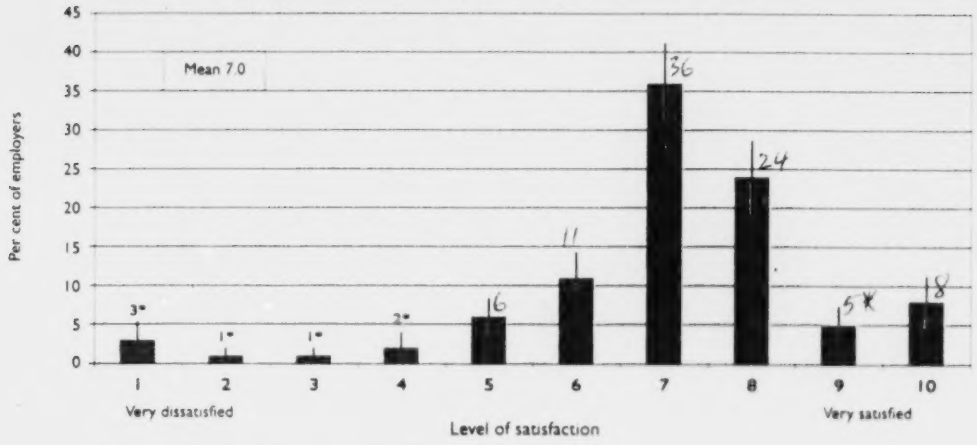
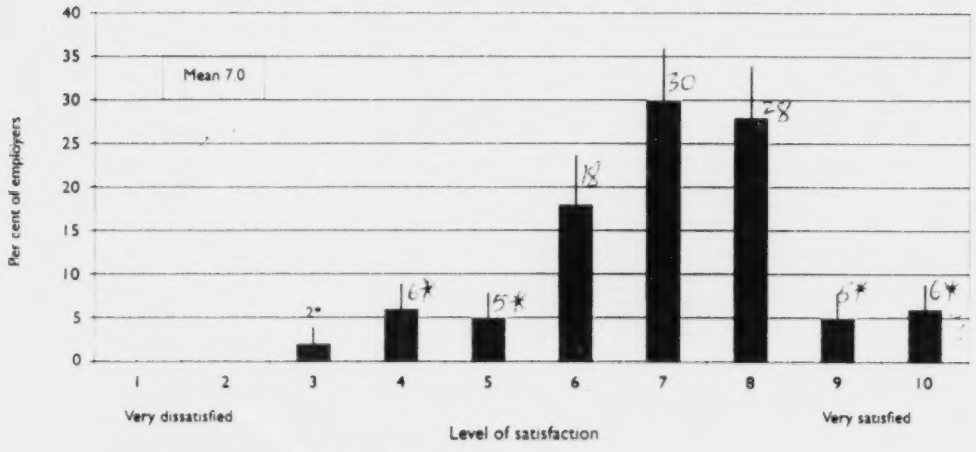
Figure 5.14: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, Northern Territory, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Figure 5.15: Overall satisfaction with VET providers, Australian Capital Territory, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

With a few exceptions, overall satisfaction with VET training providers was fairly constant from industry to industry, with mean satisfaction scores of 7.1 to 7.3 prevailing. The major exception to this was the Electricity, gas and water supply industry. Employers within this industry were less likely to be satisfied (mean of 6.4) than other industries, with 10% of employers giving a rating of 4 or less. Satisfaction was high in the Communication industry, with a mean score of 9.3.

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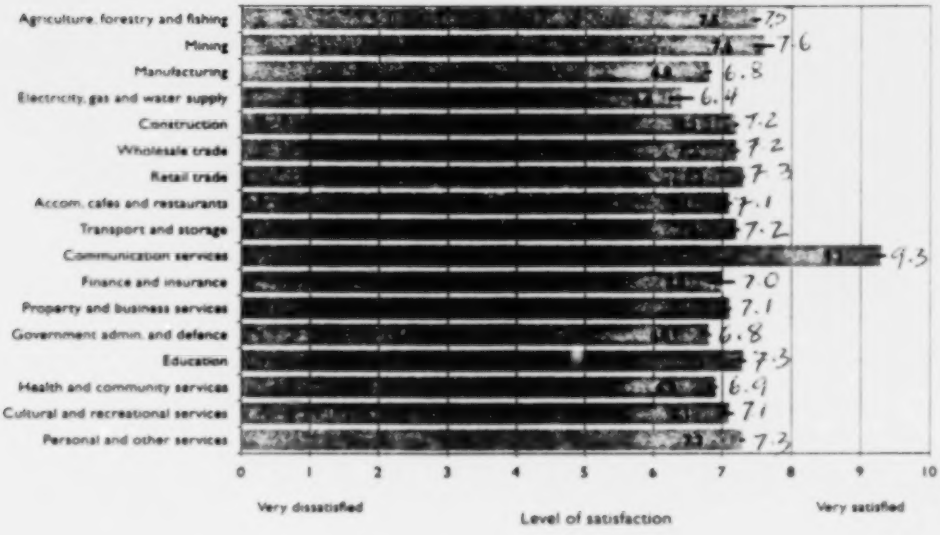
Figure 5.16: Mean score for overall satisfaction with VET providers by industry



Overall satisfaction with TAFE

This section examines overall satisfaction with TAFE training delivery.

Employers who had TAFE graduates were asked to give an overall rating based on their experience with TAFE on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was 'Very dissatisfied' and 10 was 'Very satisfied'. The results are presented both as mean scores and as percentages, and are shown for employer size, State and industry type.

The main findings in this section include:

- overall satisfaction with TAFE was generally high, 82% of employers who had TAFE graduates giving a score of 6 or over out of 10 as a measure of their satisfaction with TAFE;
- satisfaction was high for employers of all sizes, but especially so for medium employers (87%); and
- high levels of satisfaction were expressed in some industries. In particular by employers in Communication services (98%), Government administration and defence (94%), Agriculture, forestry and fishing (93%), Retail trade, Transport and storage, Property and business services (all 90%).

The overall mean of employers' ratings of their satisfaction with TAFE was 7.2 on a scale of 1 to 10. Figure 5.17 shows the mean overall satisfaction ratings by employer size vary little, at 7.2 for both small and medium employers and 6.8 for for large employers.

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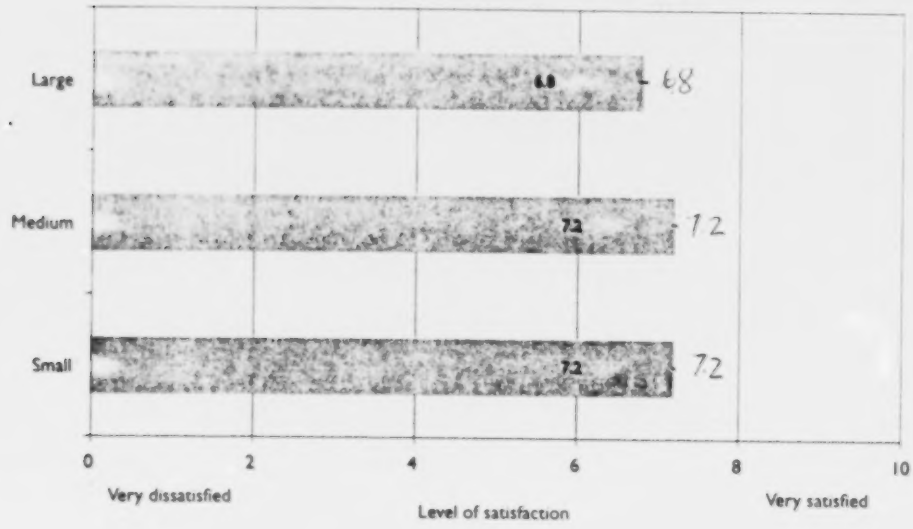
Figure 5.17: Mean score for overall satisfaction with TAFE by employer size.

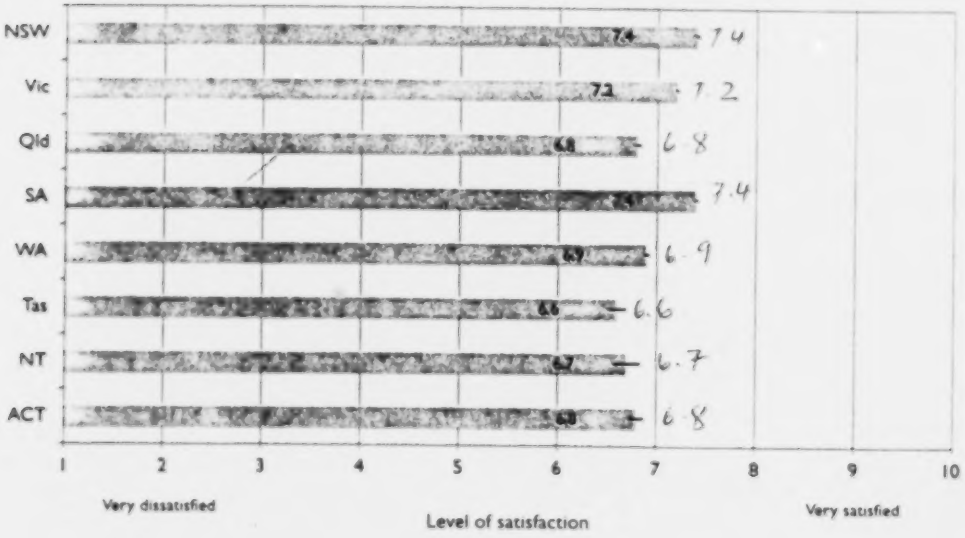


The percentage of employers expressing a satisfaction rating of 6 or higher was greater for medium and small employers (84% and 83% respectively) than for large employers (62%).

There was not much variation between employer groups in the proportion dissatisfied with TAFE overall (defined as a rating of 4 or lower). However, a higher proportion of large employers (37%) gave a response of either "can't say" or gave a rating of 5 than did medium (8%) or small employers (13%).

Figure 5.18 shows the range of mean satisfaction ratings by State/Territory was between 6.6 and 7.4. There was some difference in the jurisdictions with higher mean ratings for TAFE in New South Wales and South Australia (both 7.4), and lower means in Tasmania (6.6) the Northern Territory (6.7).

Figure 5.18: Mean score for overall satisfaction with TAFE providers by State/Territory



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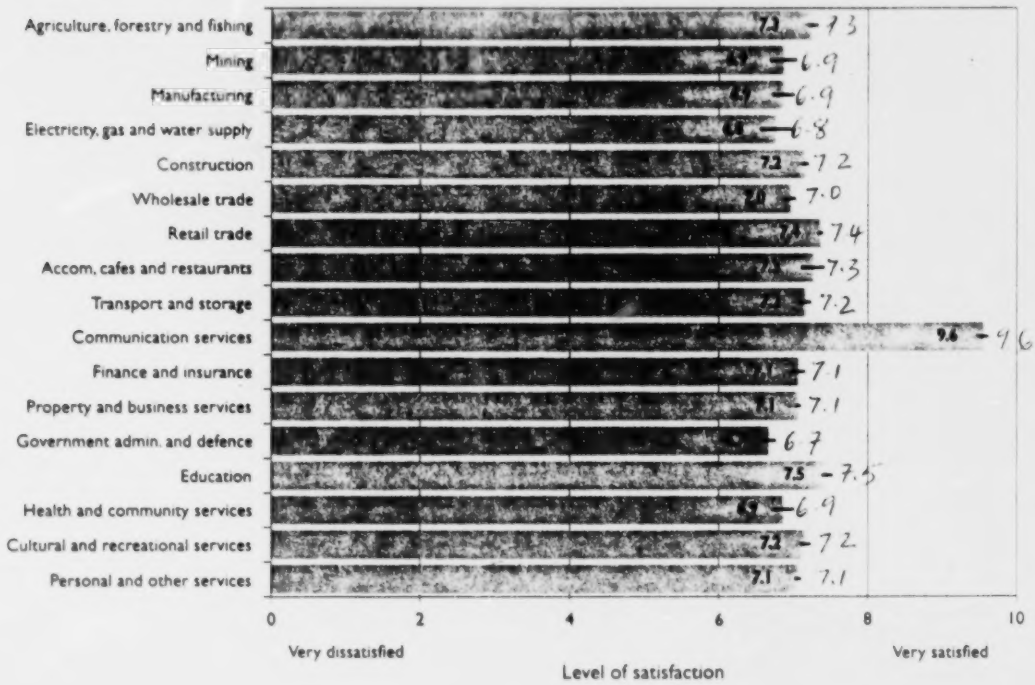
In terms of percentages of employers giving a rating of 6 or higher, among the jurisdictions with higher levels of satisfaction with TAFE were South Australia (90%) and New South Wales (88%). Among those with lower levels of satisfaction still had around three quarters of employers who were satisfied and include Tasmania (73%) Queensland (75%) and Victoria (77%). However, in Victoria a slightly larger proportion of employers reported a "can't say" response (8%). Lower levels of dissatisfaction, represented by a rating of 4 or lower, were more likely to be expressed by employers in New South Wales (2%) Victoria (3%) and South Australia (4%). Higher levels of dissatisfaction with TAFE among employers were in Tasmania (12%), Queensland and Western Australia (10% each).

Mean overall satisfaction scores for industry type ranged from 6.7 to 9.6. Employers in Government administration and defence (6.7) were less likely to be satisfied, while in Communication services (9.6) employers were more likely to be satisfied.

Figure 5.19: Mean score for overall satisfaction with TAFE by industry



Among the industries with high proportions of employers who were satisfied with TAFE (i.e. gave ratings of 6 and above), were Communication services (98%), Government administration and defence (94%), Agriculture, forestry and fishing (93%), Property and business services and Retail trade (both 90%). In the industries with lower satisfaction levels around two thirds of employers reported being satisfied and these included Education (65%), Wholesale trade (67%) and Electricity, gas and water supply (66%).

Low dissatisfaction levels (i.e. a rating of 4 or lower) were more likely to be reported by employers in Agriculture, forestry and fishing, Communication services and Cultural and recreational services (all less than 1%). In contrast, employers in Manufacturing and Mining (8% each) were more likely to be dissatisfied with their overall experience with TAFE.

Overall satisfaction with TAFE - comparison with 1995, 1997 and 1999

Overall satisfaction with TAFE in 1997 and 1999 is not directly comparable with the 1995 results since the 1995 survey asked two questions; overall satisfaction with graduates who received their training prior to being employed with the organisation, and overall satisfaction with graduates who completed their qualification after starting with the organisation. However, the scale used was identical and some comparisons can be made between the mean scores for 1995, 1997 and 1999.

Table 5.3 shows that in 1995, large employers were more likely to report being satisfied (mean score of 7.6 and 7.4). In 1997, there was little variation in the mean satisfaction score across employer size. In 1999 however, large employers were less likely to report being satisfied, with the mean satisfaction score for large employers falling to 6.8 and the mean for both small and medium employers rising to 7.2.

Table 5.3: Mean scores for overall satisfaction with TAFE by employer size, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Employer size	1995 - Completed TAFE before employment	1995 - Completed TAFE after employment	1997 - Employers of TAFE graduates	1999 - Employers of TAFE graduates
Small	6.7	6.4	6.6	7.2
Medium	6.4	6.4	6.7	7.2
Large	7.6	7.4	6.6	6.8

Table 5.4 shows the overall mean satisfaction scores for TAFE by State/Territory for 1995, 1997 and 1999. In 1997 there was an apparent improvement in the mean satisfaction scores in Victoria, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory, albeit a small improvement. By 1999, the mean satisfaction scores had risen in all States, except Tasmania where it remained the same.

Table 5.4: Mean scores for overall satisfaction with TAFE by State/Territory, 1995, 1997 and 1999

State	1995 - Completed TAFE before employment	1995 - Completed TAFE after employment	1997 - Employers of TAFE graduates	1999 - Employers of TAFE graduates
NSW	6.9	6.6	6.5	7.4
Vic	6.7	6.2	7.0	7.2
Qld	6.8	6.5	6.5	6.8
SA	6.2	6.7	6.8	7.4
WA	6.5	6.8	6.5	6.9
Tas	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.6
NT	5.6	6.8	6.2	6.7
ACT	6.2	5.9	6.4	6.8

5.4 Employers with recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment

Introduction

As noted earlier in this report, the 1999 survey focuses on the difference between those employers with direct experience of vocational education and training and others. Employers with recent VET graduates were divided into two groups based on whether they had contact with these graduates during their course. This was determined by whether the graduate(s) had completed their training course before, or after, they commenced their current employment. Employers with at least one graduate who completed their course after commencing employment with them, were asked for their views on the training course(s) and graduates' skills. Employers without graduates who completed their course after being employed with them were asked for their views on their graduates' skills only. This section reports separately on those employers who provided views on the training course(s) as well as graduates' skills. Discussion relates to their views on the importance of selected aspects of courses and skills along with areas in need of improvement, and the availability, relevance and quality of VET courses.

Section 5.4, which follows, reports on employers who provided views on their graduates' skills only. Discussion relates to their views on the importance of selected aspects of skills, along with areas in need of improvement and their views on the relevance and quality of graduates' skills.

Relative importance of service aspects

The two aspects of VET most cited as important by employers who were asked about graduates' courses as well as skills, related to delivery of graduates' courses. They were teacher ability and relevance of course content. Teacher ability was considered by the largest proportion of employers to be one of the most important aspects of service which a VET provider can offer. Over half (55%) of employers rated teacher ability extremely important while another third (33%) felt it to be very important. On relevance of course content, just under half (48%) of employers felt it was extremely important and another third (34%) felt it was very important.

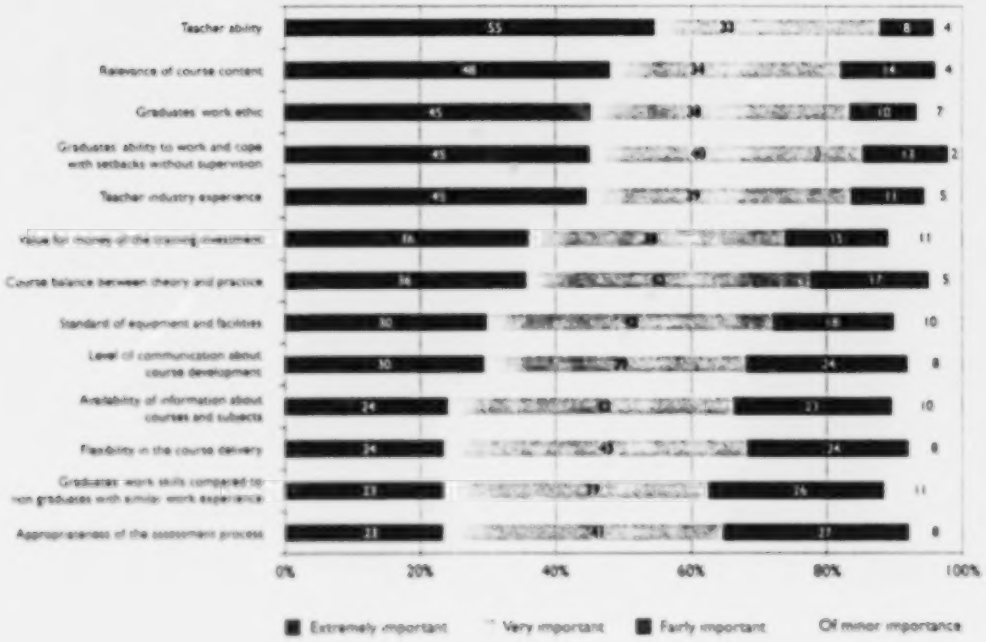
After teacher ability and relevance of course content, employers rated graduates' work ethic, graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks with relatively little supervision and teacher industry experience as equal in importance. For each of these three aspects, approximately 45% of employers felt that these were extremely important aspects of the service provided by a VET organisation. The proportions who felt them to be very important were 38%, 40% and 39% respectively.

Around one in three employers (36%) felt value for money was an extremely important aspect of the service offered by training providers, while another 38% felt it to be very important. Course balance between theory and practice was considered to be of similar importance with, again, around one in three employers (36%) feeling it was extremely important and another 42% feeling it was very important.

Most of the remaining aspects of service, those rated by employers as being of slightly less importance than those already discussed, relate broadly to the mechanics of course delivery, and include issues such as assessment, delivery flexibility, information provided and equipment standards. These aspects were all rated as extremely important by around a quarter of employers (between 24% and 30%) and very important by more than a third (between 39% and 45%).

Of the four aspects of graduates' skills, the work skills of graduates compared to non-graduates with similar work experience were least likely to be considered extremely important, with around one in four (23%) employers reporting this.

Figure 5.20: Employers with recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment by importance of aspects of graduates' skills and courses, per cent



Priorities for improvement

Employers who were asked about their graduates' skills and courses were asked to nominate, in order of priority, the four aspects of service which they would most like to see improved. The aspect most commonly nominated first priority, by more than one in four employers (27%), was relevance of course content. Employers also considered this to be among the most important aspects of VET delivery. Priorities for improvement after this were teacher ability (10%), course balance between theory and practice (9%) and flexibility in course delivery (9%). Graduates' work ethic, teacher industry experience and level of communication about course development then followed, with some 5% of employers nominating each of these as the aspect in which they would most like to see improvement.

When all the aspects nominated for improvement are considered (regardless of priority), the relevance of course content is still foremost in employers' perceptions of the aspect most in need of improvement. As Figure 5.21 shows, relevance of course content was nominated in the top four by 51% of employers and this is followed by a cluster comprising teacher ability (39%), teacher industry experience (35%) and course balance between theory and practice (35%). Around one in three employers (30%) nominated flexibility in course delivery and around one in five employers or less (19%, 20% and 16%) nominated the aspects of graduates' skills as in need of improvement.

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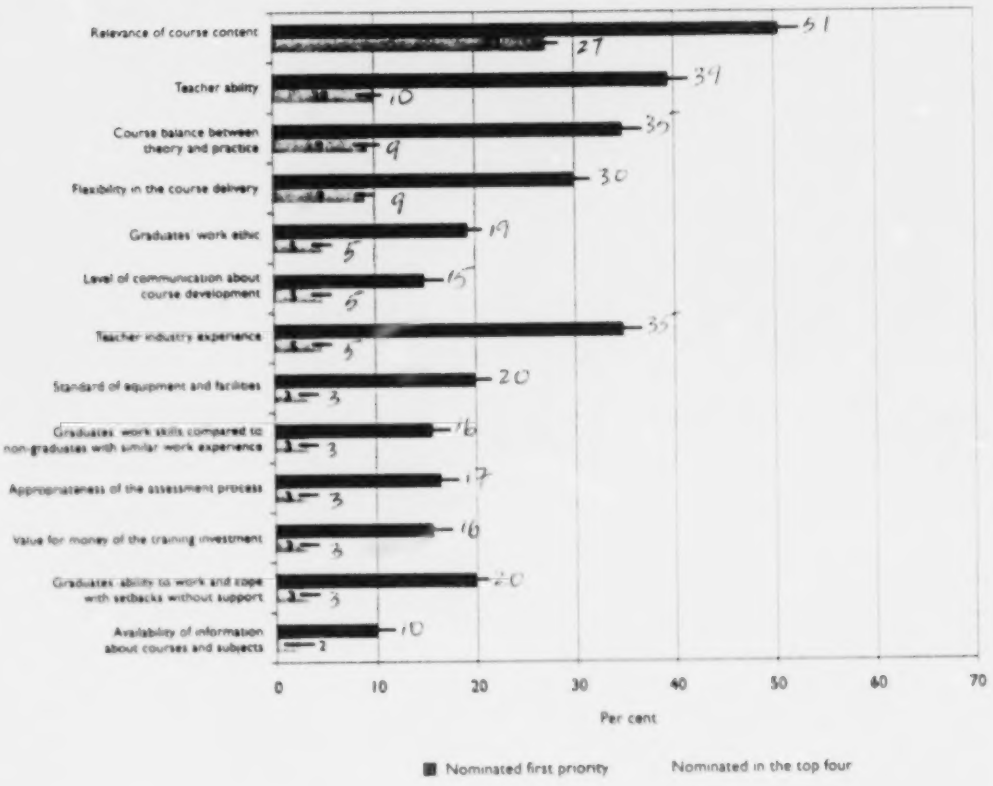
Figure 5.21: Employers with recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment by priorities for improvement, per cent



Views on graduates' courses

For each aspect of course delivery by VET providers, the employers of VET graduates were asked for their perceptions on the level of service which they:

- currently receive; and
- would expect from an excellent training provider.

Employers' perceptions of course content and delivery issues

The following aspects of course content and delivery were of varying levels of importance to employers who were asked about graduates' courses as well as skills:

- the relevance of course content;
- the course balance between theory and practice;
- flexibility in course delivery; and
- the appropriateness of the assessment process.

Employers were more likely to consider the relevance of course content (82%) and course balance between theory and practice (78%) to be important than flexibility in course delivery (68%) and the appropriateness of the assessment process (65%).

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Figure 5.22: Course content and delivery issues: employers' perceptions (means)

Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Relevance of course content
Not relevant to the industry's current needs
Mostly current and useable by the industry
Directly relevant to the needs of the industry
At the leading edge of industry needs
Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Course balance between theory and practice
An uneven balance of inadequate theory and practice
The basic practical skills and some theory
A reasonable balance between most of the needed practice and theory
All the necessary practical skills matched by the required theory
Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Flexibility in course delivery
No flexibility
Limited choice
The institutions will try to meet individual and industry needs
Custom design to suit industry and individual needs
Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Appropriateness of the assessment process
No appropriate assessment is undertaken
Meets only some of industry's needs
Measures many of the skills valued by industry
Relevant rigorous, and matches industry requirements

On all the aspects of course content and delivery, employers of recent VET graduates viewed the level of 'service' currently provided by VET organisations as below the level employers perceived as excellent, although not by a great deal.

A more detailed picture can be gained from the following tables (tables 5.5 - 5.8). It was apparent that employers' perceptions of the balance between theory and practice being currently provided were closer to their expectations of excellence. As can be seen in table 5.6, at a national level, around half of employers (51%) felt there was a reasonable balance between most needed practice and theory and another quarter (24%) felt that all the necessary practical skills were matched by the required theory. Table 5.7, however, shows employers' perceptions of the level of flexibility in course delivery was not as positive with around one in three feeling there was limited choice (26%) or no flexibility (8%).

Particular patterns include:

- Relatively few employers in the Communication services industry (10%) felt that course content was directly relevant, compared with 40% of employers in general.
- Conversely, in Retail trade (53%) and Government administration and defence (52%) around half of employers felt that course content was better than directly relevant to the needs of industry.

- Across business size, there was some variation, but not great, in the proportions of employers holding the different views of course content and delivery. Medium sized employers were more likely to feel that institutions will try to meet individual and industry needs (53%) in the flexibility of delivery compared with small and large employers (41% and 38% respectively). Approximately two thirds of employers overall, held a positive view of the assessment process, although slightly fewer large sized employers (31%) felt that the assessment process measured many of the skills valued by industry compared with medium and small sized employers (47% and 45% respectively).
- Transport and storage industry employers were more likely to feel that the assessment processes meet only some industry needs (43%), compared with employers in general (23%).

Table 5.5: Employers' perceptions of the relevance of course content which VET providers currently provide, per cent (a)

Descriptions of levels of relevance of course content	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Not relevant to the industry's current needs	8	6	6	7	9	7	10	10*	7
2. Mostly current and useable by the industry	48	28	45	29	31	38	32	40	39
3. Directly relevant to the needs of the industry	34	46	34	49	44	48	48	36	40
4. At the leading edge of industry needs	9	16	10	7	10	6	9	9*	11
Can't say	1*	3*	5	7	5*	2*	2*	5*	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Table 5.6: Employers' perceptions of the balance between theory and practice in courses currently provided by VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of level of course balance between theory & practice	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. An uneven balance of inadequate theory and practice	6	11	4*	4*	9	13	3*	4*	7
2. The basic practical skills and some theory	8	9	20	10	14	11	25	13	12
3. A reasonable balance between most needed practice and theory	53	52	49	52	52	47	51	59	51
4. All the necessary practical skills matched by the required theory	27	19	22	32	21	20	20	20	24
Can't say	6	10	5	2*	4*	9	1*	4*	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Table 5.7: Employers' perceptions of the current level of flexibility in course delivery by VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of levels of flexibility in course delivery eg times, venues, duration, distance education.	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. No flexibility	7	12	4*	6	5*	9	11	3*	8
2. Limited choice	31	21	23	20	29	28	15	26	26
3. The institutions will try to meet individual and industry needs	43	44	43	40	41	43	43	44	43
4. Custom design to suit industry and individual needs	13	19	28	32	20	17	22	17	20
Can't say	6	3*	1*	1*	5*	2*	9	10*	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Table 5.8: Employers' perceptions of the assessment process which VET providers currently provide, per cent (a)

Descriptions of levels of assessment process	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. No appropriate assessment is undertaken	2*	1*	5	4*	9	5*	2*	4*	4
2. Meets only some of industry's needs	23	20	20	26	26	22	31	39	23
3. Measures many of the skills valued by industry	47	44	45	38	44	29	40	31	44
4. Relevant rigorous, and matches industry requirements	21	29	24	24	15	35	23	22	23
Can't say	7	6	6	8	6	9	4*	5*	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

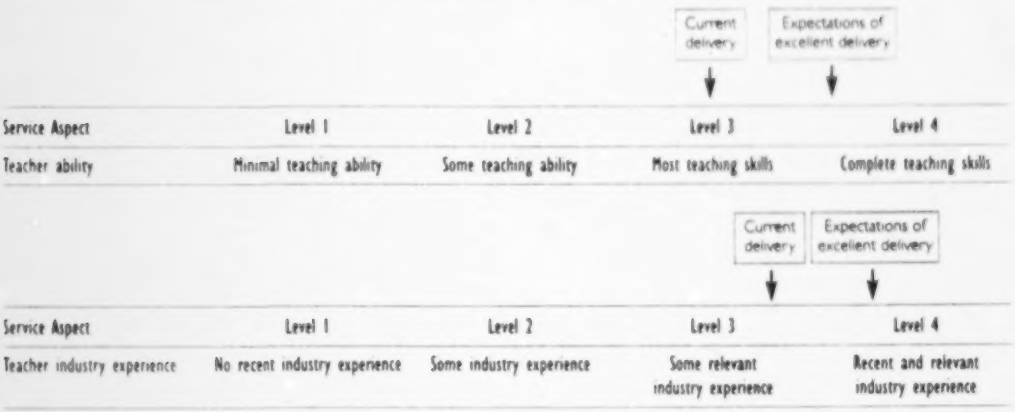
(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Employers' perceptions of level of VET teachers' ability and experience

Overall, for employers who were asked about graduates' courses as well as skills, the ability and experience of VET teachers were among the most important of the aspects of service discussed. More than eight in ten employers felt that teacher ability (88%) and teacher industry experience (84%) were extremely or very important. Employers also have high expectations of teachers' ability and slightly more so for teacher industry experience, and, interestingly, the perception of the level of current teacher industry experience is relatively closer to the level expected of an excellent provider.

Figures 5.23-5.24 and tables 5.9-5.10 provide a summary of the overall pattern. At a jurisdiction level, there was little variation.

Figure 5.23: Teacher ability and teacher industry experience: employers' perceptions (means)



At an industry level, employers in Personal and other services (58%), Transport and storage and Health and community services (both 52%) were more likely to feel that teachers have recent and relevant industry experience, compared with all employers (39%). At least half of employers in all industries except Finance and insurance (42%) felt that teachers have most or complete teaching skills. However, a similar proportion (43%) in Finance and insurance felt unable to comment on teacher ability and this was high compared to all employers (14%). Employers in Communication services had lower expectations of teacher ability than those in other industries. Some 84% would reasonably expect an excellent training provider to have teachers with most teaching skills (compared with 29% of all employers), while around 15% of employers in this industry would reasonably expect an excellent training provider to have teachers with complete teaching skills, compared with 63% of all employers.

There was little variation across business size, although large sized businesses were more likely to feel unable to comment on the ability (28%) or industry experience (29%) of teachers compared to employers overall (14% for both teacher ability and teacher industry experience).

Table 5.9: Employers' perceptions of the ability of teachers currently provided by VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of levels of teacher ability	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Minimal teaching ability	1*	6	6	5	10	2*	4*	1*	5
2. Some teaching ability	13	9	22	8	19	15	11	30	14
3. Most teaching skills	53	41	36	48	42	33	52	41	45
4. Complete teaching skills	23	21	23	26	24	28	24	21	23
Can't say	10	23	13	12	6	22	10	8*	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Table 5.10: Employers' perceptions of the industry experience of teachers currently provided by VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of levels of teacher ability	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. No recent industry experience	2*	0	5	2	0	14	4*	0	2
2. Little industry experience	8	4	14	5	14	9	15	14	9
3. Some relevant industry experience	30	38	38	41	45	28	44	36	36
4. Recent and relevant industry experience	51	34	31	38	33	39	30	37	39
Can't say	10	24	12	14	8	11	7*	13	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Employers' perceptions of VET provider communication and information

The next two aspects relate to issues of information and communication provided by VET providers and received similar rankings in terms of their importance to employers who were asked about graduates' courses as well as skills (68% and 66% of these employers respectively, considering these aspects to be very or extremely important). These two aspects were:

- Communication about course development
- The availability of information about courses and subjects

Very few employers (2%) felt that industry input into the design of VET courses was discouraged. Just over a third of employers (37%) felt that industry has little input to the design of courses while just under a third (31%) felt that industry and the institutions communicate very well.

Overall, one in five employers (19%) perceived VET institutions as actively seeking industry involvement, while employers in Agriculture, forestry and fishing (33%), Mining (31%), Finance and insurance (30%), Transport and storage and Retail trade (both 29%), were more likely to have this perception.

In the main, the majority of employers perceived the availability of information about courses to be readily available and specific to industry needs. There was little difference in the proportions across industries, with nearly all industries being clustered approximately between 30% and 47% of employers holding this view. The exceptions were Finance and insurance (65%) and Retail trade (57%) in which employers were more likely to feel that information about courses was readily available and specific to industry needs, and Communication services in which employers were less positive with just 9% holding this view. Overall, employers in Communication services also had lower expectations of an excellent provider with around 13% nominating they expected an excellent provider to keep them fully informed about courses and options to meet all their needs.

Across employment size, large businesses were less positive about both aspects of communication. Those who considered they were currently being kept fully informed about courses and options to meet all their needs (7%), and those who felt that institutions actively seek industry involvement in course development (8%), were low compared with employers overall holding these views (16% and 19%). Otherwise, there was little variation.

Figure 5.24: Communication and information, employers' perceptions (means)

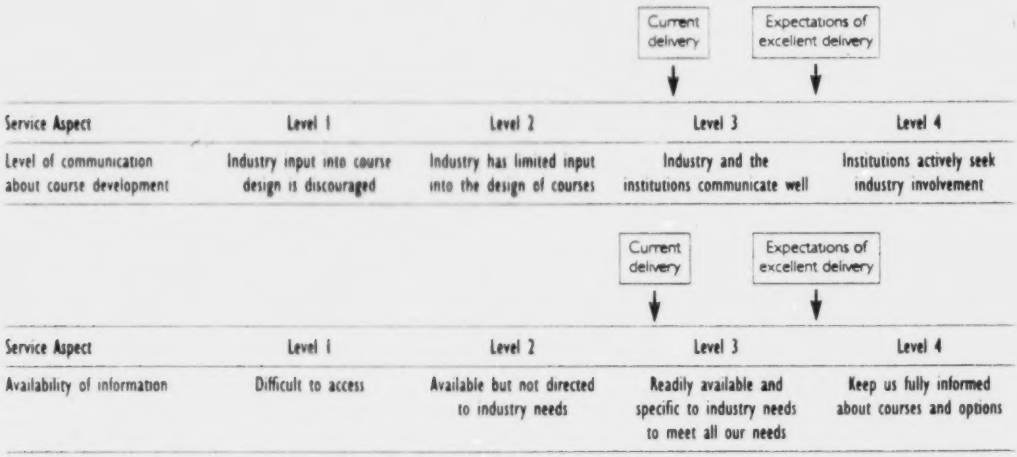

Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Level of communication about course development
Industry input into course design is discouraged
Industry has limited input into the design of courses
Industry and the institutions communicate well
Institutions actively seek industry involvement
Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Availability of information
Difficult to access
Available but not directed to industry needs
Readily available and specific to industry needs to meet all our needs
Keep us fully informed about courses and options

Table 5.11: Employers' perceptions of the level of communication they currently receive from VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of level of communication about course development	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Industry input into course design is discouraged	1*	2*	2*	3*	3*	4*	3*	1*	2
2. Industry has limited input into the design of courses	38	31	38	36	45	42	27	42	37
3. Industry and institutions communicate well	37	24	31	24	34	22	41	27	31
4. Institutions actively seek industry involvement	13	27	20	27	14	27	26	12	19
Can't say	11	15	10	10	4	6	3	18	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Table 5.12: Employers' perceptions the availability of information currently received from VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of levels of availability of information about courses & subjects	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Difficult to access	13	6	8	9	6	6	10	12	9
2. Available but not directed to industry needs	30	19	27	18	37	42	26	31	27
3. Readily available and specific to industry needs	40	57	39	45	38	24	47	39	44
4. Keep us fully informed about courses and options to meet all our needs	12	13	21	22	17	25	17	12	16
Can't say	6	5	5	6	2*	2*	1*	5*	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

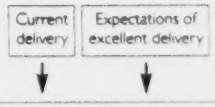
(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Employers' perceptions of standard of equipment and facilities

Whether viewed in terms of importance or in terms of priorities for improvement, to employers who were asked about graduates' courses as well as skills, the standard of equipment and facilities provided at training institutions was of less significance than the other aspects covered in the survey.

Of the aspects covered, this showed among the smaller gaps between perceptions of current delivery and expectations of an excellent provider. A majority of employers (57%) felt that the equipment and facilities at the training provider comply with current industry standards. Furthermore, a similar majority (57%) would expect an excellent training provider to provide equipment and facilities to that level. A further 32% would expect an excellent training provider to provide state of the art equipment.

Figure 5.25: Standard of equipment and facilities: employers' perceptions (means)



Service Aspect	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Standard of equipment and facilities	Inadequate and do not meet industry standards	Just adequate	Comply with current industry standards	State of the art

Table 5.13: Employers' perceptions of the standard of equipment and facilities which VET providers currently provide per cent (a)

Descriptions of standard of equipment and facilities	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Inadequate and do not meet industry standards	1*	1*	1*	5	5*	4*	1*	1*	2
2. Just adequate	16	24	18	16	17	18	12	19	18
3. Comply with current industry standards	70	45	54	56	51	49	64	62	57
4. State of the art	5	15	5	12	10	15	10	9*	9
Can't say	8	15	22	11	17	15	12	10*	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

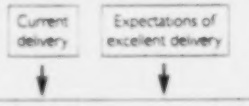
Views on graduates' skills

Employers' perceptions of level of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience

In terms of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience, employers who were asked about graduates' courses as well as skills, were more likely to perceive the current level of skills of recent graduates from VET providers as being below that expected from an excellent service provider.

Table 5.14 shows that around 38% of these employers felt that the graduates from VET providers apply the skills they've learned more effectively than non-graduates with similar work experience, and around 30% of employers felt that graduates have significantly improved skills and productivity over non graduates. Expectations of the skills of a graduate from an excellent training provider were also high, with just under two thirds (61%) of employers reporting they would expect an excellent training provider to provide graduates with significantly improved skills and productivity.

Figure 5.26: Graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience: employers' perceptions (means)



Service Aspect	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Level of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience	Don't show any better skills	Have a few more of the required skills	More effectively apply the skills they've learned	Have significantly improved skills and productivity

Although considered important, graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience were regarded as important by employers to a lesser extent than some other aspects of VET. Around 63% of employers considered graduates' work skills to be either extremely important or very important.

Table 5.14: Employers' perception of the work skills of VET graduates they currently receive from VET providers compared with non-graduates with similar work experience, per cent (a)

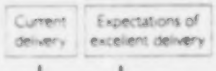
Descriptions of levels of graduates' work skills	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Don't show any better skills	2*	5	8	6	3*	12	3*	8*	5
2. Have a few more of the required skills	20	19	10	16	12	13	15	11	16
3. More effectively apply the skills they've learned	37	29	50	26	43	48	34	30	38
4. Have significantly improved skills and productivity	31	34	24	33	32	18	38	33	30
Can't say	10	13	8	18	10	9	10	19	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Employers' perceptions of graduates' work ethic

Although, these employers were asked about aspects of graduates' courses as well as graduates' skills, they considered graduates' work ethic to be among the more important aspects upon which the performance of VET providers is based. Some 84% of employers viewed graduates' work ethic as extremely or very important. Overall, around one in three employers (33%) perceived that current VET graduates are really involved in their work and always strive for excellence while two in three (64%) expected this level of work ethic from an excellent training provider. This compares with just under half of employers (46%) who held the view that their current graduates concentrate on their work and mostly focus on quality.

Figure 5.27: Graduates' work ethic: employers' perceptions (means)



Service Aspect	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Graduates' work ethic	Show almost no interest in their work	Show some interest in their work and occasionally use some initiative	Concentrate on their work and mostly focus on quality	Are really involved in their work and always strive for excellence

While employers in all three size groups had very similar expectations of the work ethic which an excellent training provider would provide, large employers were less likely than small or medium employers to view their recently graduated employees as a high standard.

Employers in Agriculture, forestry and fishing (50%), Cultural and recreational services (44%) and Transport and storage were more likely to be positive about the work ethic of their graduates and view them as really involved in their work and always striving for excellence. Those industries in which employers were slightly less impressed with the work ethic of their graduates than most, employers were more likely to report that their graduates show some interest in their work and occasionally use some initiative. These include Manufacturing (34%), Electricity, gas and water supply (30%) and Health and community services (30%).

Table 5.15: Employers' perceptions of the work ethic of graduates they currently receive from VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of level of graduates' work ethic	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Show almost no interest in their work	0	1*	1*	0	0	0	5*	1*	1
2. Show some interest in their work and occasionally use some initiative	23	11	8	11	19	10	18	16	15
3. Concentrate on their work and mostly focus on quality	43	46	53	46	45	51	39	40	46
4. Are really involved in their work and always strive for excellence	27	39	35	39	34	32	34	38	33
Can't say	7	3*	4*	4*	3*	6	5*	4*	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

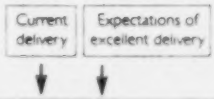
(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Employers' perceptions of graduates' ability to work without supervision

Whether viewed by level of 'importance' or by 'priorities for improvement', the ability of VET graduates to work and cope with setbacks without supervision was seen as being among the more significant aspects of VET by employers who were asked about graduates' courses as well as skills.

Table 5.16 shows these employers' perceptions of graduates' abilities in this regard. Around 32% perceived their graduates as being able to work virtually unsupervised and prepared to take ownership of the job and any problems compared to some 54% who would expect such graduate skills from an excellent provider. Education industry employers (25%) and those in Construction (23%) were among those more likely to feel that their VET graduates required supervision, while employers in Electricity, gas and water supply (1%) and Communication services (3%) were less likely to hold this view.

Figure 5.28: Graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision: employers' perceptions (means)



Service Aspect	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision	Need virtually 100% supervision and cannot cope with even minor work problems	Need quite a lot of supervision, but can cope with minor work problems	Need some supervision, but generally cope well with most work problems	Can work virtually unsupervised and are prepared to take ownership of the job and any problems

Around half of employers (49%) felt that their graduates from VET providers needed some supervision but generally coped well with most problems. A slightly smaller proportion (43%) would expect this of graduates from an excellent training provider.

Table 5.16: Employers' perceptions of the ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision of the graduates they currently receive from VET providers, per cent (a)

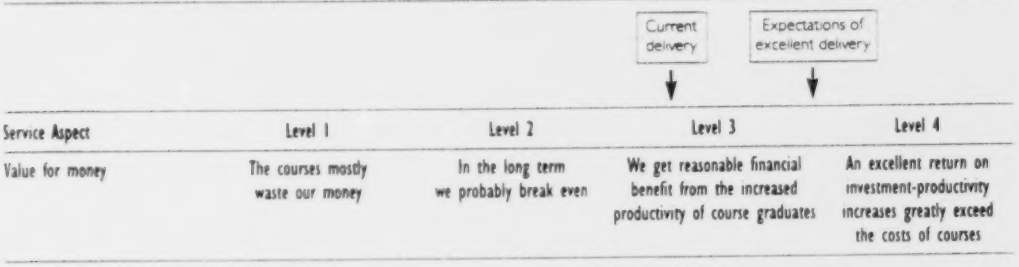
Descriptions of level of graduates' ability to work & cope without supervision	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Need virtually 100% supervision and cannot cope with even minor work problems	1*	0	0	3*	1*	1*	5*	1*	1
2. Need quite a lot of supervision, but can cope with minor work problems	12	9	15	12	26	11	14	20	13
3. Need some supervision, but generally cope well with most work problems	51	48	45	58	43	55	50	46	49
4. Can work virtually unsupervised and are prepared to take ownership of the job and any problems	29	38	37	25	27	24	28	29	32
Can't say	7	4	4*	2*	3*	9	2*	3*	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Employers' perceptions of value for money

Value for money of the training investment in graduates was considered an extremely or very important aspect of VET delivery by around three-quarters (74%) of employers who were asked about graduates' courses as well as skills.

Figure 5.29: Value for money: employers' perceptions (means)


Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Value for money
The courses mostly waste our money
In the long term we probably break even
We get reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of course graduates
An excellent return on investment-productivity increases greatly exceed the costs of courses

Overall, just under half (45%) of these employers felt they received a reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of VET graduates. Approximately 5% of employers felt VET courses mostly wasted their money. Large employers (64%) were more positive than smaller employers (43%) and medium sized employers (42%) in this regard. Small and medium sized employers were more likely to feel that, in the long run, they probably break even (23% and 19% respectively) compared with large employers (10%).

The gap between employers' perceptions of current value for money and their expectations of value from an excellent VET provider indicate they would like greater value for money, with the overall level expected of an excellent VET provider being higher than employers' perceptions of current value for money. Around half of employers (52%) would expect an excellent return on the investment and just over a third (37%) would expect reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of VET graduates from an excellent provider.

Table 5.17: Employers' perceptions of the value for money of the training investment they currently receive from VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of level of value for money	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,569
1. The courses mostly waste our money	4	4	8	5*	3*	5*	7*	0	5
2. In the long term we probably break even	20	21	21	20	20	21	20	12	21
3. We get reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of course graduates	52	35	44	46	37	45	47	57	45
4. An excellent return on investment-productivity increases greatly exceed the costs of courses	15	23	16	17	27	12	21	16	18
Can't say	9	17	11	10	5*	16	5*	14	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

5.5 Employers with recent VET graduates, all of whom, completed their training before commencing their current employment

Introduction

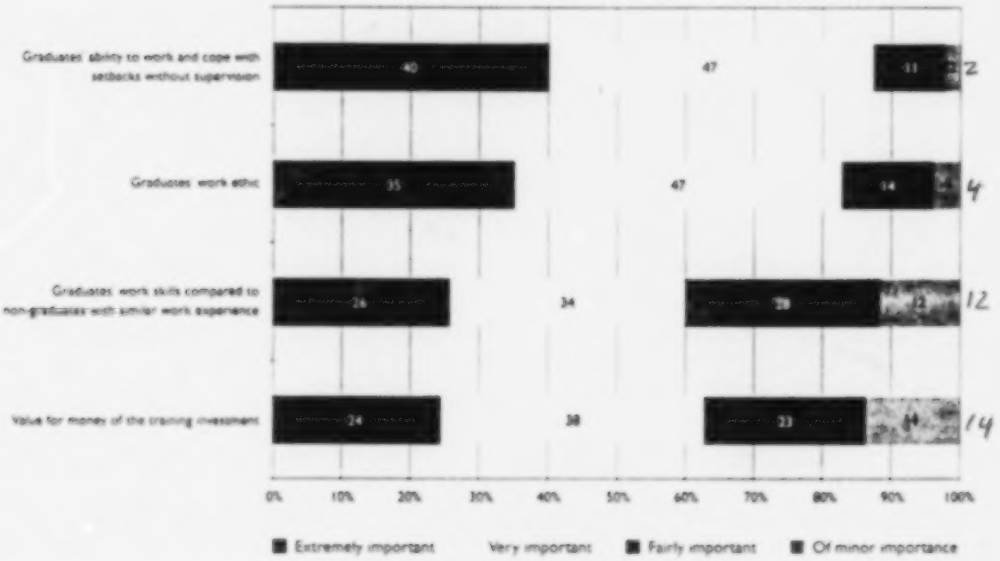
As noted earlier in this chapter, this section reports on employers with recent VET graduates who provided views on their graduates' skills only. Discussion relates to their views on the importance of selected aspects of graduates' skills, along with areas in need of improvement as well as their views on the relevance and quality of graduates' skills.

Relative importance of service aspects

The aspect of graduates' skills most cited by employers as very or extremely important was the ability of graduates to work and cope with setbacks without supervision. This ability was considered to be one of the most important aspects of skills by more than eight in ten (87%) employers, with just under half (47%) of employers rating it extremely important while a similar proportion (40%) felt it to be very important. The next most important aspect of graduates' skills was graduates' work ethic. Around eight in ten (82%) employers considered this to be very (47%) or extremely (35%) important.

These were followed by value for money of the training investment and level of graduates' skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience which were considered to be of similar importance. For each of these aspects, approximately one in four (24% and 26%) employers felt that these were an extremely important aspect of graduates' skills and around one in three (34% and 38%) felt them to be very important.

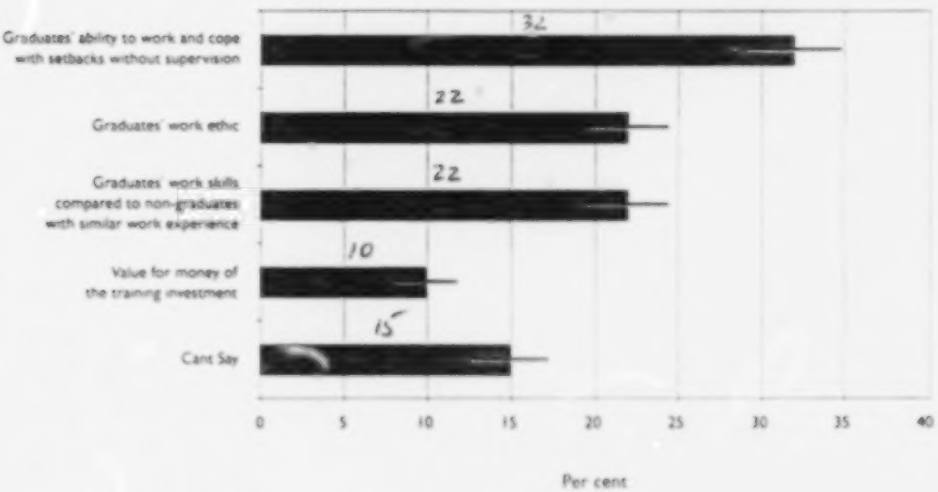
Figure 5.30: Employers with recent VET graduates, all of whom completed their training before commencing their current employment by importance of graduates' skills, per cent



Priorities for improvement

Employers who were asked about their graduates' skills only, were asked to nominate the one aspect of service which they would most like to see improved. The aspect most commonly nominated, by around one in three employers (32%), was graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision. This was followed by graduates' work ethic and graduates' skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience (both 22%). The aspect least nominated as a priority for improvement was value for money with around one in ten (10%) employers nominating this.

Figure 5.31: Employers with recent VET graduates, all of whom, completed their training before commencing their current employment by priority for improvement, per cent



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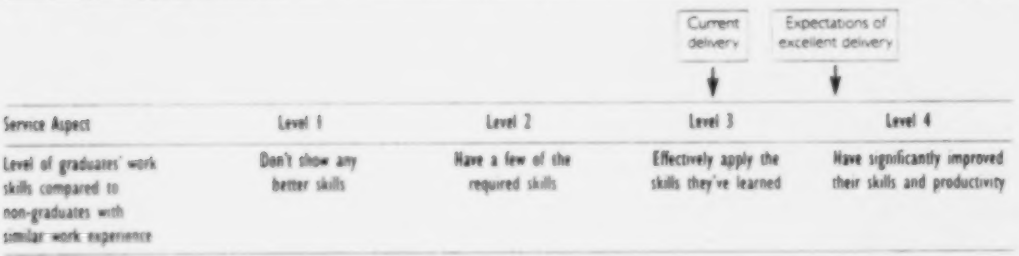
Views on graduates' skills

Employers' perceptions of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience

In terms of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience, employers who were asked about graduates' skills only, perceived the current level of skills of recent graduates from VET providers as being close to that expected from an excellent service provider.

Table 5.18 shows the percentage of employers who selected the various levels for this service aspect. Among the findings, it can be seen that just over a quarter (29%) of employers felt that the graduates from VET providers more effectively apply the skills they've learned. However, a larger proportion (61%) of employers felt that an excellent training organisation should provide graduates with significantly improved skills and productivity.

Figure 5.32: Graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience: employers' perceptions (means)


Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Level of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience
Don't show any better skills
Have a few of the required skills
Effectively apply the skills they've learned
Have significantly improved their skills and productivity

Employers considered the level of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience to be an important aspect of VET delivery, but relatively less so than their ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision and their work ethic.

Table 5.18: Employers' perception of the work skills of VET graduates they currently receive from VET providers compared with non-graduates with similar work experience, per cent (a)

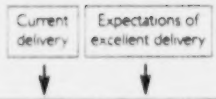
Descriptions of level of graduates' work skills	NSW n=178	VIC n=135	QLD n=115	SA n=129	WA n=168	TAS n=146	NT n=104	ACT n=79	AUST n=1,054
1. Don't show any better skills	2*	11	12*	12	6*	4*	5*	8*	7
2. Have a few more of the required skills	14	34	5	14	17	17	11	18	17
3. More effectively apply the skills they've learned	33	22	25	38	33	21	44	49	29
4. Have significantly improved skills and productivity	41	23	36	27	35	45	33	21	34
Can't say	10	10*	22	9*	10	13	7*	4*	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates, all of whom completed their training before commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Employers' perceptions of graduates' work ethic

As already noted, employers who were asked about graduates' skills only, considered graduates' work ethic to be among the more important aspects upon which the performance of VET providers is based. Overall, these employers were more likely to perceive the work ethic demonstrated by recent VET graduates as fairly close to that expected from an excellent training provider.

Figure 5.33: Graduates' work ethic: employers' perceptions (means)



Service Aspect	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Graduates' work ethic	Show almost no interest in their work	Show some interest in their work and occasionally use some initiative	Concentrate on their work and mostly focus on quality	Are really involved in their work and always strive for excellence

Across employer size, those with small and medium employment were more likely to view their recent VET graduates as being really involved in their work and always striving for excellence (41% and 36%) than large employers (20%). The expectations of the work ethic of graduates from an excellent training provider were also higher in small and medium employers than large ones, with some 65%, 53% and 41%, respectively, reporting they would expect this high standard from an excellent training provider.

Employers in Health and community services (41%), Retail trade (26%) and Transport and storage (30%) were more likely to report the work ethic of their graduates at the lower level of showing some interest in their work and occasionally using some initiative. Those in the Education (86%) and Finance and insurance (84%) industries were more likely than other industries to rate the current standard of their recently graduated employees at the highest level.

Table 5.19 shows that around a third (36%) of employers felt their recent VET graduates concentrated on their work and mostly focused on quality. However, nearly two thirds (63%) of employers felt that an excellent training organisation should provide graduates who are really involved in their work and always strive for excellence. Work ethic was relatively important to employers, with some one third (35%) considering it extremely important and almost half (47%) rating it very important..

Table 5.19: Employers' perceptions of the work ethic of graduates they currently receive from VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of level of graduates' work ethic	NSW n=178	VIC n=135	QLD n=115	SA n=129	WA n=168	TAS n=146	NT n=104	ACT n=79	AUST n=1,054
1. Show almost no interest in their work	0	2*	0	0	1*	0	0	0	1*
2. Show some interest in their work and occasionally use some initiative	17	28	9*	16	14	14	21	1	18
3. Concentrate on their work and mostly focus on quality	28	32	46	42	44	42	32	57	36
4. Are really involved in their work and always strive for excellence	47	36	36	36	37	40	37	24	40
Can't say	7*	3*	9*	7*	4*	4*	9*	1*	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates all of whom completed their training before commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Employers' perceptions of graduates' ability to work without supervision

Whether rated by 'importance' or by 'priorities for improvement', employers who were asked about graduates' skills only, considered the ability of VET graduates to work and cope with setbacks without supervision to be one of the most significant aspects of the service offered by VET providers.

In general, as figure 5.34 and table 5.20 show, these employers' perceptions of graduates' abilities in this regard were below that which they expected of an excellent training provider. While one in three (33%) felt their graduates were of the highest level, nearly two in three (61%) expected this level from an

excellent training provider. Employers in Finance and insurance (58%), Personal and other services (49%) and Education (47%) were more likely to feel that their recent VET graduates can work virtually unsupervised and are prepared to take ownership of the job and any problems. Employers in Health and community services were more likely to feel their graduates required relatively more supervision, with 28% viewing their graduates as needing quite a lot of supervision, but able to cope with minor work problems, compared with 12% of employers overall.

Figure 5.34: Graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision: employers' perceptions (means)

			Current delivery ↓	Expectations of excellent delivery ↓
Service Aspect	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision	Need virtually 100% supervision and cannot cope with even minor work problems	Need quite a lot of supervision, but can cope with minor work problems	Need some supervision, but generally cope well with most work problems	Can work virtually unsupervised and are prepared to take ownership of the job and any problems

Overall, around half (48%) of employers felt that their graduates from VET providers needed some supervision but generally coped well with most problems and about a third (32%) would expect this of graduates from an excellent training provider. Large employers were more likely than small or medium employers to feel their recent VET graduates required supervision, with some 35% rating them at level 2 compared with 12% for employers overall.

Table 5.20: Employers' perceptions of the ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision of the graduates they currently receive from VET providers, per cent (a)

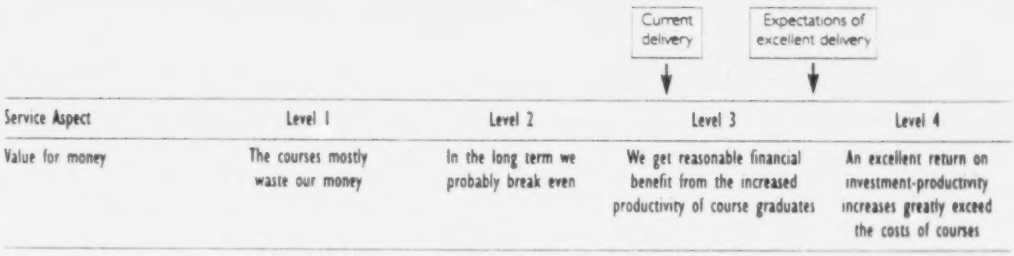
Descriptions of level of graduates' ability to work & cope without supervision	NSW n=178	VIC n=135	QLD n=115	SA n=129	WA n=168	TAS n=146	NT n=104	ACT n=79	AUST n=1,054
1. Need virtually 100% supervision & cannot cope with even minor work problems	1*	1*	0	1*	2*	7*	0	2*	1*
2. Need quite a lot of supervision, but can cope with minor work problems	4*	18	16	11*	15	23	10*	24	12
3. Need some supervision, but generally cope well with most work problems	50	50	40	54	51	43	47	53	48
4. Can work virtually unsupervised and are prepared to take ownership of the job and any problems	39	29	35	33	25	23	35	18	33
Can't say	6*	3*	8*	1*	7*	3*	8*	1*	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates all of whom completed their training before commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

Employers' perceptions of value for money

Employers who were asked about graduates' skills only, considered value for money of the training investment a less important aspect of the 'service' provided by VET institutions (63% felt it was extremely or very important).

Figure 5.35: Value for money: employers' perceptions (means)


Current delivery
Expectations of excellent delivery
Service Aspect
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Value for money
The courses mostly waste our money
In the long term we probably break even
We get reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of course graduates
An excellent return on investment-productivity increases greatly exceed the costs of courses

Overall, approximately 42% of employers felt that they received a reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of course graduates. There was little variation in views across employer size. Employers in Finance and insurance (65%) were more likely to consider they received an excellent return on the investment.

The gap between employers' perceptions of current value for money and that which employers expected from an excellent provider indicated that employers would like better value for money. Approximately 15% of employers considered they currently receive an excellent return on the investment, while 44% expect this level of return from an excellent training provider. Around 19% feel that in the long term they break even, however, all except 2% of employers expect a better return from an excellent VET provider.

Table 5.21: Employers' perceptions of the value for money of the training investment they currently receive from VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of level of value for money	NSW n=178	VIC n=135	QLD n=115	SA n=129	WA n=168	TAS n=146	NT n=104	ACT n=79	AUST n=1,054
1. The courses mostly waste our money	2*	28	2*	4*	1*	2*	1*	8*	8
2. In the long term we probably break even	21	15	21	18	20	13	17	17*	19
3. We get reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of course graduates	42	38	50	44	37	36	45	49	42
4. An excellent return on investment-productivity increases greatly exceed the costs of courses	22	9*	8*	10*	22	13	18	14*	15
Can't say	13	10*	19	24	19	36	19	11*	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates all of whom completed their training before commencing their current employment.
* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution.

6 Employers' training practices and related issues

Overview

Employers with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates were asked for some general information on their organisation's training practices and related issues, such as providing work experience for students and their main source of information on VET related matters.

Results show there is a difference in the proportions of employers providing training between the two groups with the latter being less likely to subsidise or pay for employees' training. However, the pattern of usage of external training organisations is similar within each group of employer. In both groups, large employers were more likely to provide training overall. Employers in both groups also delivered accredited training using Training Packages.

Employers with recent VET graduates tended to use TAFE more as their main source of information than employers with no VET graduates although industry associations were more likely to be reported as the main source of information overall. Employers with recent VET graduate employees were also more likely to have regular contact with training providers, although, more than two thirds reported not having regular contact. Employers' suggestions for improvements to the VET system reflect their general views in Section 4 which show the majority of employers held the view that there should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training, and that they should have more input into course content.

6.1 Training provided for employees

Employer provided training

All employers in the survey were asked whether they had paid for, or subsidised the cost of, employees' training during the 12 months prior to the survey. They were asked broadly about three types of training:

- on-the-job training, that is, by showing an employee how to improve their job skills in work being undertaken;
- in-house training, that is, organised by the employer for own staff using employer's staff or training consultants; and
- external training, that is, organised and conducted at venues outside the workplace by training or educational establishments, agencies or private consultants.

Around three quarters (73%) of employers with recent VET graduates had paid for, or subsidised the cost of, employee training during the 12 months prior to the survey and this is similar to the proportion who did so in 1997 (78%). In 1999, employers with no VET graduates were less likely to have paid for, or subsidised the cost of, employee training, with around 40% providing training over the same period. Table 6.1 shows the types of training provided.

Table 6.1: Whether training provided by types of training, per cent

	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
Training provided	73	40
On-the-job-training	35	17
In-house training	36	16
External training	62	32
Training not provided	27	59

Overall, external training was more likely to be provided than other training by employers in both groups. Of those employers with VET graduates who had paid for, or subsidised the cost of, employee training, more than eight in ten (86%) had provided external training and around half provided in-house training (49%) and on-the-job training (48%). The employers with no VET graduates who paid for, or subsidised, employee training, showed a similar pattern of training provision, with approximately 81% providing external training, and about half as many providing in-house training (41%) and on-the-job training (42%).

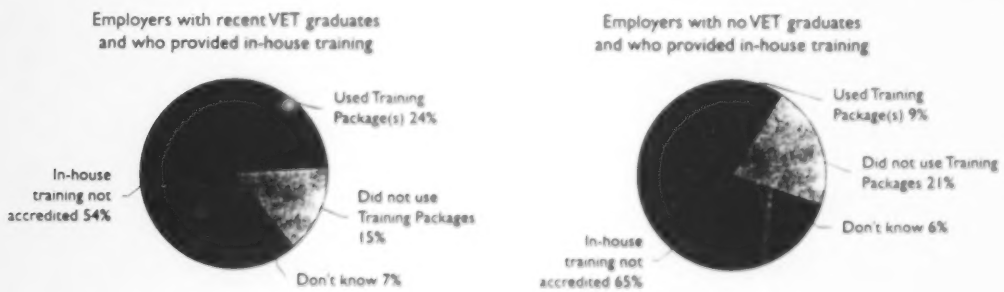
In-house training and Training Packages

In 1998, the Australian National Training Authority introduced a new approach to vocational education and training. Competencies, qualifications and assessment guidelines have been linked and combined in Training Packages. These Training Packages are developed by national Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs) and tailored to meet industry needs. Also, many businesses have extensive and sophisticated training operations and these businesses can register to enable them to train employees to industry standards using Training Packages. All employers in the survey who reported providing in-house training for their employees were asked whether any training was accredited and, if so, whether that training had been delivered using Training Packages. The above information was provided to respondents to assist them.

Of employers with recent VET graduates who provided in house training, just under half (46%) reported that they delivered accredited training, and just over half (54%) delivered in-house training which was not accredited. Of those employers who delivered accredited in-house training, around one in two (52%) used Training Packages and around one in three (33%) did not.

Compared with this, a similar proportion (35%) of employers with no VET graduates who provided in house training reported delivering accredited training, although the proportions using/not using Training Packages were reversed. Of those who delivered accredited training, around one in four (26%) used Training Packages while more than half (58%) did not. Figure 6.1 shows the type of in-house training delivered.

Figure 6.1: Employers who provided in-house training by whether accredited and delivered using Training Packages


Employers with recent VET graduates and who provided in-house training
Used Training Package(s) 24%
In-house training not accredited 54%
Did not use Training Packages 15%
Don't know 7%
Employers with no VET graduates and who provided in-house training
Used Training Package(s) 9%
Did not use Training Packages 21%
Don't know 6%
In-house training not accredited 65%

Use of external training providers

Some 62% of employers with recent VET graduates provided external training for employees. They used a range of training provider types for external training. Approximately half of these employers used TAFE, with large sized employers being more likely to have used TAFE (66%) than medium (42%) or small sized employers (50%) during the last 12 months. While two thirds of large employers used TAFE, a similar proportion also used private consultants (72%), and around half used non-TAFE training providers (51%) and industry associations (53%). This diversification could be expected in larger establishments and shows a higher proportion of large employers overall, paying for, or subsidising, training for their employees. The use of different training providers by employers with recent VET graduates is shown in figure 6.2.

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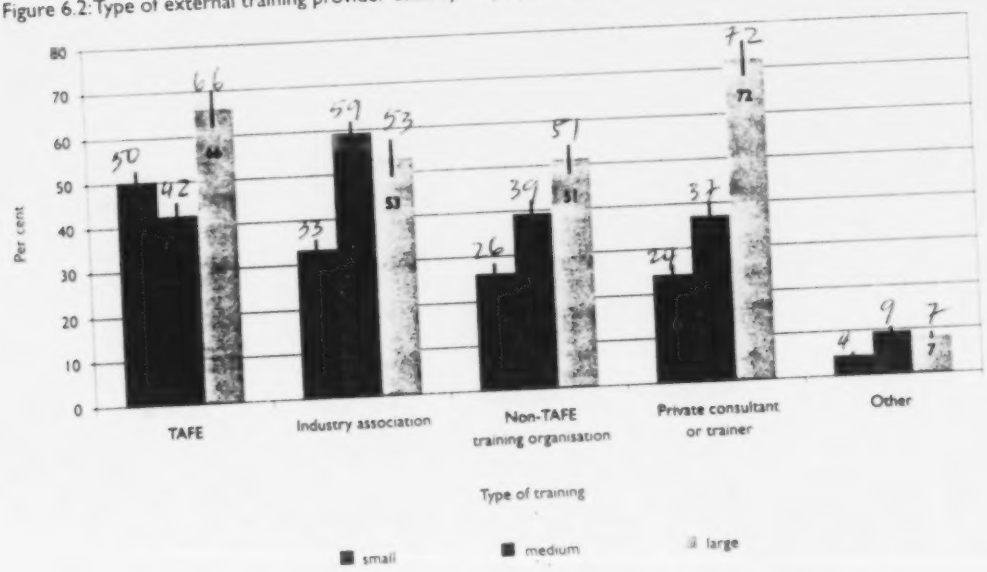
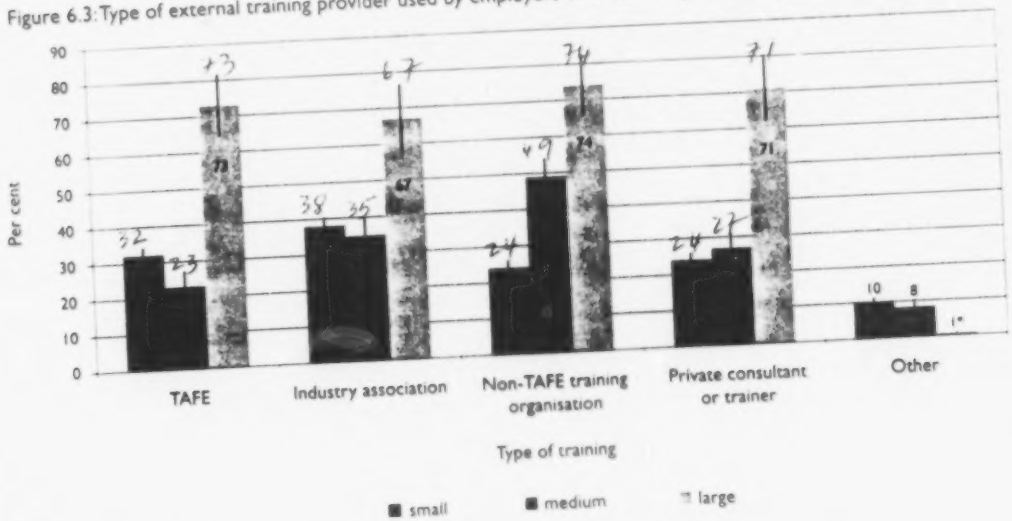
Figure 6.2: Type of external training provider used by employers with recent VET graduates by employer size, per cent



The use of external training providers by employers with no VET graduates was different from employers with recent VET graduates, with around a third (32%) of these employers paying for, or subsidising, employees' training. However, the overall pattern by employer size was similar. Again, large sized employers with no VET graduates were more likely to use each type of provider. Some three quarters reported using TAFE (73%) compared with around a quarter (23%) of medium and around a third (32%) of small sized employers during the last 12 months. However, medium sized employers with no VET graduates were less likely to use Industry association training providers (35%) than medium sized employers with recent VET graduates (59%). Use of different training providers by employers with no VET graduates is shown in figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3: Type of external training provider used by employers with no VET graduates by employer size, per cent



* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

6.2 Information sources

Employers with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates were asked to name their main source of information on vocational training and skills development matters. As could be expected, employers with recent VET graduates tended to use TAFE more (19% to 30% range) as their main source of information than employers with no VET graduates (9% to 17% range). Small and medium sized employers in both groups were similar to each other with around a third citing Industry associations as their main source of information (35% to 38% range across both groups of employer). Large employers, however, were more likely than small or medium employers to report this as their main source (46% of employers with recent VET graduates and 71% of those with no VET graduates). Main source of information by employer size is set out in table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Main source of information by size of employer, per cent

	Main source of information					
	TAFE	Government training dep'ts/auth.	Industry associations	No main source	Other	Total
Employer size	Employers with recent VET graduates					
Small (1-19 employees)	30	7	38	17	9	100
Medium (20-99 employees)	19	16	35	16	13	100
Large (100 or more employees)	29	8	46	9	9	100
	Employers with no VET graduates					
Small (1-19 employees)	12	4	36	30	17	100
Medium (20-99 employees)	9	9	35	26	21	100
Large (100 or more employees)	17	2*	71	6*	4*	100

* Subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Among the industries which had high proportions of employers with recent VET graduates citing TAFE organisations or institutions as their main source of information were Wholesale trade (46%) Personal and other services (35%) and Health and community services (34%). Among the industries with higher proportions of employers with no VET graduates citing TAFE were Mining (28%), Wholesale trade and Education (both 22%).

At a jurisdiction level, roughly three quarters of employers with recent VET graduates within the six States and the Australian Capital Territory used TAFE. Government training departments/authorities or Industry associations. The Northern Territory was slightly lower (66%). The proportions using each source were similar across the six States. Around a quarter used TAFE, small proportions used Government training departments/authorities (less than 15% in all States) and from a third to just under half of employers used Industry associations. Employers in the Territories were a little different from those in the States in that they were more likely to use Government training departments/authorities than the States (22% for both the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory).

For employers with no recent VET graduates the pattern was different with, overall, around half of these employers using TAFE (12%). Government training departments/authorities (5%) or Industry associations (36%) as their main source of information on vocational training and skills development matters. Another 29% reported having no main source and around 18% reported other sources. The most frequently cited other source was newspapers and magazines (8%). Across the States and Territories, employers in South Australia and the Northern Territory were less likely to use TAFE (6% in both) and more likely to have no main source of information (43% and 40%).

Table 6.3 shows the main information source for employers with recent VET graduates and the type of institution at which they received training. As might be expected, employers with all, or mostly, TAFE trained

recent VET graduates, were more likely to cite TAFE organisations or institutions as their main source of information (34%) than were employers whose recent VET graduates had been all, or mostly, trained elsewhere (13%).

Table 6.3: Employers' main information source by type of institution where all, or most, recent VET graduates trained, per cent

	Type of institution	
Main source of information	TAFE	Non-TAFE
TAFE	34	13
Industry associations	34	51
Government training departments and authorities	7	9
Other	9	9
No main source	16	17
Total	100	100

6.3 Industry changes

All employers in the survey were asked their views on changes in their industry which could affect their training requirements in the future. Some 63% of employers with a VET graduate named a change. Just over one in four (27%) reported that advancing technology and keeping up with technological change would affect their training requirements. Approximately 8% mentioned the Goods and Services Tax (GST) or tax reform, 8% were concerned about accreditation requirements/changes or changes in regulations/standards, 7% mentioned that their staff would need to be more qualified and skilled, and 5% said that changes in Government legislation, policies, laws or licensing would affect them. Industries in which these employers were more likely to report that technological change would change their training requirements were Communication services (85%) and Electricity, gas and water supply (52%). Among the industries in which these employers were less likely to report that changing technology would affect their requirements include Personal and other services (13%) and Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (14%).

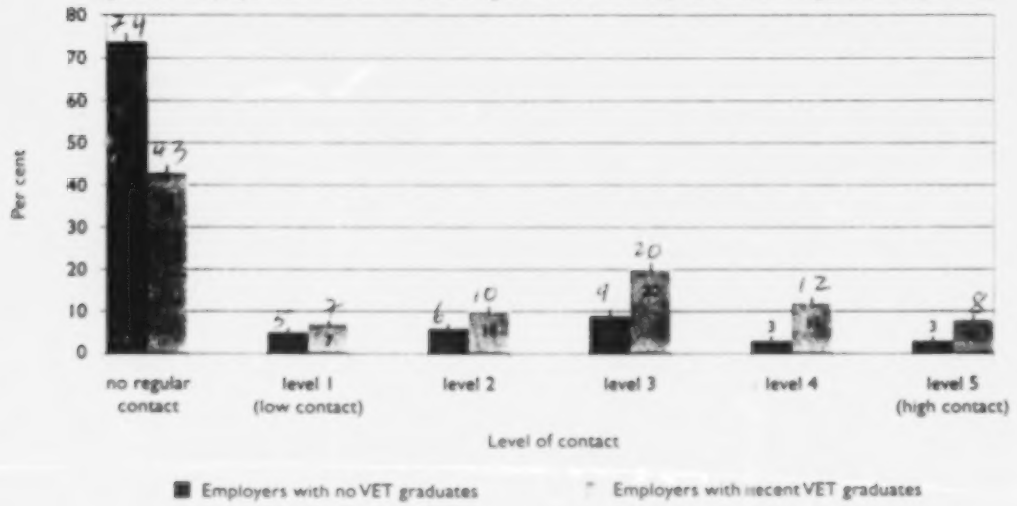
The pattern of response was similar for employers with no VET graduates, with around half (52%) naming a change. Around one in five (21%) said advancing technology and keeping up with technological change would affect their training requirements. Approximately 10% mentioned the Goods and Services Tax (GST) or tax reform, some 7% were concerned about accreditation requirements/changes or changes in regulations/standards, about 6% mentioned that their staff would need to be more qualified and skilled, and 3% said that changes in Government legislation, policies, laws or licensing would affect them.

6.4 Contact with TAFE and non-TAFE training providers

During the 12 months prior to the survey more than one in two (57%) employers with a recent VET graduate reported having some regular contact with a TAFE organisation or other industry relevant training provider compared with around one in four (26%) of employers with no VET graduates. Employers who had regular contact with training providers were also asked to rate their level of contact on a 5 point scale on which 1 equated to minimal contact and 5 equated to a high level of contact. As might be expected, employers with no VET graduates were less likely to have high contact with training providers than employers with recent VET graduates.

Figure 6.4 shows, as might be expected, employers with recent VET graduate employees were more likely to have regular contact with training providers, although some 43% reported having no regular contact. Just under three quarters (74%) of employers with no VET graduate employees reported having no regular contact, and small proportions of each of these two employer groups reported having some regular, but minimal, contact.

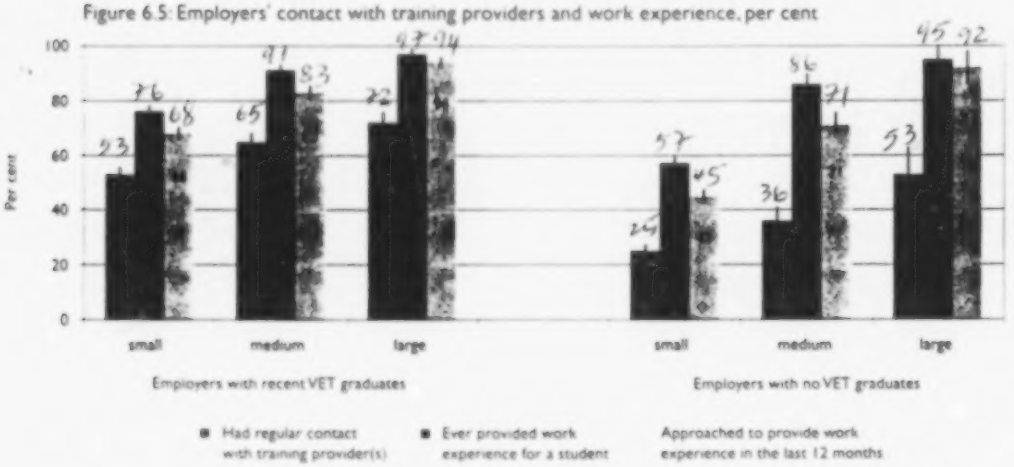
Figure 6.4: Employers' contact with TAFE colleges or other industry relevant training providers, per cent



The percentage of employers who reported having personal contact also varied by employer size. For both groups of employer, a smaller proportion of small employers reported having contact with TAFE or non-TAFE providers than medium or large employers while large employers tended to have the highest proportion reporting contact with providers.

Similarly, in both groups of employer, a smaller proportion of small employers reported that they had ever provided work experience for a student, or been approached to provide work experience for a student in the last 12 months. Large employers were more likely to provide work experience or be approached. This pattern is shown in figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5: Employers' contact with training providers and work experience, per cent



6.5 Skill shortages

Both types of employer, those with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates, were asked whether they had experienced recruitment difficulties in the last 12 months and, if so, whether this had led to shortages in staff. Of employers in the former group, around one in three (35%) had experienced recruitment difficulties in the last 12 months and employer size did not appear to be a factor with 33% of small employers, 41% of medium employers and 36% of large employers experiencing recruitment difficulties. Of employers in the latter group, around one in four (25%) experienced recruitment difficulties and the distribution by employment size was approximately 23% of small employers, 39% of medium employers and 54% of large employers.

Of the employers who experienced recruitment difficulties, staff shortages resulted for approximately 71% of employers with recent VET graduates and some 65% of employers with no VET graduates.

Among the industries in which employers with recent VET graduates were more likely to report having had staff shortages were Finance and insurance (89%), Transport and storage (89%) and Health and community services (84%). Industries in which these employers were less likely to have had staff shortages included Electricity, gas and water supply (17%), Education (50%) and Personal and other services (55%). Employers with no VET graduates experiencing staff shortages were more likely to be in Communication services (81%), Education (81%) and Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (79%).

Table 6.4: Employers who experienced recruitment difficulties in the last 12 months, per cent

	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
Experienced recruitment difficulties	35	25
Led to staff shortages	71	65
Did not lead to staff shortages	29	35

6.6 Improvements in the training system

There were a variety of responses from employers in both groups when they were asked to make suggestions for improvements in the training system. Around two thirds (69%) of employers with recent VET graduates and slightly less than half (45%) of employers with no VET graduates gave one or more suggestions for improvement. The means of improvement most frequently mentioned was that the training system must provide more practical and on-the-job training (15% of both groups of employer). This was followed by the suggestion that training must be specific and relevant to industry needs (11% and 8%). Employers with recent VET graduates also frequently mentioned they would like more input by industry into courses (10%).

These results support the findings in Section 4 on employers' general views on VET which show that the majority of employers with recent VET graduates and those with no VET graduates, hold the view that there should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training, and that they should have more input into course content.

Table 6.5: Suggestions for improvements in the training system, per cent (multiple responses)

Employers' suggestions for improvement	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
Content		
Provide more practical training/more work experience/industry experience/on-the-job training	15	15
Training must be specific/relevant/focused to industry needs	11	8
Keep up with technology/update courses in line with technology	2	1
Communication		
Seek more input/feedback from employers/industry/ask them what they want in courses etc.	10	5
Improve communication/contact/relationship between employers/industry and training providers	6	3
Provide more information to employers/industry re courses	8	5
Provide teachers with more industry knowledge	4	1
Flexibility		
Be more flexible re timetables/hours etc.	9	3
Provide more distance education/country people have to travel too far	2	3
Cost		
Provide cheaper/more cost effective courses/better value for money	2	2
Assessment		
Provide better assessment/evaluation of students/adhere to training standards	4	1
Graduates		
Instil more social/people/communications/human relations skills in graduates	3	1
Other	14	8

Appendix 1: Methodology

Summary

The 1999 national Survey of Employer Views on vocational education and training (VET) is the third survey of this nature with previous surveys conducted in 1995 and 1997. In the two earlier surveys (titled the Employer Satisfaction Survey), in-scope employers were defined as those with at least one employee who had completed a VET course of at least 200 hours within the two years prior to the survey (termed a recent VET graduate). This group was targeted again in the 1999 survey however, in addition, a sample of employers with no VET graduate employees was also surveyed with the aim of obtaining an understanding of the views of employers with no VET graduate employees.

Also in the 1999 survey, employers with recent VET graduates were divided into two groups based on whether they had contact with these graduates during their course. This was determined by whether the graduate(s) had completed their training course before, or after they commenced their current employment. Employers who had at least one graduate who completed their course after being employed with them were asked for their views on the training course and graduates' skills. Employers who had no graduates who completed their course after being employed with them were asked for their views on their graduates' skills only.

The survey targeted employers in all eight States and Territories (mainland) of Australia. An employer was defined as an Establishment unit (as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics) within Australia. In these aspects, the 1999 survey was the same as 1997. Other aspects of the 1999 survey differed to varying degrees, including scope, sample frame and survey instrument. A total of 6,053 employer interviews were completed across the three population types (see details in *Target Population* below).

The main survey was conducted by telephone using the consultant's Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Fieldwork commenced on 23 August 1999 and concluded on 15 October 1999.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire which formed the basis of the CATI, although closely aligned with the 1997 survey instrument, contained a number of modifications to reflect the changes to survey scope. A pilot survey was conducted earlier in 1999, to test the suitability of the questionnaire for the changed population and some changed questions.

On initial contact, employers were asked a series of screening questions to determine whether they were within scope. Depending on whether or not they had a VET graduate employee, the in-scope respondents answered questions about issues relating to VET training as it applied to their employees or as it applied to their general experience.

Information obtained in the survey included:

- Employers' general views of VET;
- For employers with a VET graduate, their views on the availability, relevance, and quality/value of current VET delivery as well as their expectations of an 'excellent' training provider.
  - Employers' VET practices within their business, and their general knowledge of VET, including:
  - whether they paid for or subsidised the cost of employee training or provided time off work for training;
  - methods of training used for employees;
  - preference for provider type;
  - organisations used for training delivery; and
  - main source of information about VET training and skills.

A copy of the 1999 CATI questionnaire is at Appendix 4 and a flowchart for the populations in the questionnaire is at Appendix 5. Also, a list of data items collected for each population is at Appendix 6.

The 'gap' in level of service

For each aspect of VET delivery, employers of recent VET graduates were asked for their perceptions on the level of service which they:

- currently receive; and
- expect from an excellent training provider.

The gap between employers' perceptions of the level of 'current' service and that which they expect of an 'excellent' provider is represented graphically in various figures in Section 5 of this Report. The arrows showing these two levels for each aspect of service are positioned approximately at the mean response of all employers who provided views on that particular aspect. The mean response is calculated by representing the four levels of service offered for each service aspect as the numbers 1 to 4 and thus the mean is between 1 and 4. It is not intended by this process to suggest that the scale in fact represents true, continuous data. Nevertheless, the visual representation of the extent of, and differences between, the gaps in relation to the various aspects of service assists in focusing on the areas in which employers' could be considered to see room for improvement. For example:

Figure 5.26 Graduates' work skills compared to graduates with similar work experience: employers' perceptions (means)

			Current delivery ▼	Expectations of excellent delivery ▼
	▲ 1.0	▲ 2.0	▲ 3.0	▲ 4.0
Service Aspect	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience	Don't show any better skills	Have a few more of the required skills	More effectively apply the skills they've learned	Have significantly improved skills and productivity

Sample design and frame

Design considerations

In developing the sample design, the main factors considered were:

- the overriding need to produce high quality data. A key component here was ensuring high response rates.
- stratification that appropriately reflected the analysis and reporting requirements (eg industry, size and state)
- use of two different sample frames and associated problems of sample representativeness and weighting.

Target Population

There were three target populations for this project:-

Population A. Employers with one or more employees who completed a VET qualification in the last two years and at least one of whom they employed before the graduate completed their training course.

Population B. Employers with one or more employees who completed a VET qualification in the last two years, all of whom were employed after the graduate completed their training course.

Population C. Employers with no employees with VET qualifications.

A VET qualification, for the purposes of this survey, is defined as a qualification gained through an apprenticeship or traineeship, a traineeship, or a diploma, associate diploma or certificate course from a TAFE or a non-TAFE provider (excluding university qualifications), and requiring a minimum of one semester or 200 hours of training/study.

Survey Respondent

The survey respondent was the manager responsible for staff training at the workplace. If there was more than one manager then the most senior manager was selected, and if no manager was responsible for training, personnel, staff development or human resources, then the manager of the organisation/business was selected.

Sampling Framework

The sampling unit for selection purposes was at the establishment level. This survey used two sampling frames - a listing of employers based on responses to the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) in 1998 and the Student Outcomes Survey (SOS) in 1999 (GDS sample) and a listing based on the Yellow Pages (YP sample).

General Approach Using Two Frames

Duplicates were removed from the combined list of employers obtained from the GDS/SOS and a stratified random sample was taken from the resulting list. This was then matched to the Yellow Pages and a telephone number obtained.

Although the sample was drawn from two frames, weighting procedures were developed to provide a single set of estimates for survey results relating to employers of recent VET graduates.

For further information on the sample design, the technical report is available.

Stratification

Both the Yellow Pages and the GDS frames were stratified by Industry Division x State/Territory x Size. The GDS records possessed Industry, Size and State information from two sources – the Yellow Pages and the GDS source. When removing the GDS records from the Yellow Pages frame it was necessary to use the Yellow Pages-based stratification variables. However, for the purposes of weighting the GDS records were weighted to their GDS-based stratification.

Industry Stratification

The Industry Divisions used are set out below:

- Accommodation, cafes and restaurants
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Communication services
- Construction
- Cultural and recreational services
- Education
- Electricity, gas and water supply
- Finance and insurance
- Government administration and defence
- Health and community services
- Manufacturing
- Mining
- Personal and other services
- Property and business services
- Retail trade
- Transport and storage
- Wholesale trade

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Size Stratification

The Size stratification variable was based on the employment of the establishment as recorded on the frame. The four size groups used were defined as follows. A special stratum for establishments with unknown employment was required for the Yellow Pages frame but not for the GDS frame (except as noted above, when removing GDS records from the Yellow Pages frame the Yellow Pages size measure was used).

Size Stratum	Employment
Small	1-19 employees
Medium	20-99 employees
Large	100+ employees
Unknown (YP only)	Unknown

Sample Design Constraints

Sample size constraints were set for each State and Territory, each Industry group and each Size group for both the Yellow Pages and the GDS components – these constraints were also set for each employer type (Type A, B or C as described above). The constraints are set out below.

Table 1: Sample Design Summary

Total population		Employers with Recent VET Graduates							Employers with no VET graduate	
		Population A - Employed before VET finished			Population B - Employed after VET finished				Population C	
Strata	All	GDS	YP/ABS	RSE%	All	GDS	YP/ABS	RSE%	YP/ABS	RES%
Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants	180	54	126	7.2%	100	29	71	9.8%	180	7.2%
Agriculture	90	27	63	10.3%	50	14	36	13.9%	90	10.3%
Communications	70	21	49	11.6%	40	11	29	15.5%	70	11.6%
Construction	160	48	112	7.7%	90	26	64	10.4%	160	7.7%
Cultural & Recreational	150	45	105	7.7%	90	26	64	10.2%	150	7.7%
Education	130	39	91	7.8%	70	20	50	11.2%	130	7.8%
Electricity, Gas & Water	60	18	42	8.1%	30	9	21	15.3%	60	8.1%
Finance & Insurance	140	42	98	8.3%	80	23	57	11.1%	140	8.3%
Government Admin. & Defence	130	39	91	6.3%	70	20	50	10.3%	130	6.3%
Health & Community	220	66	154	6.6%	120	34	86	9.1%	220	6.6%
Manufacturing	200	60	140	7.0%	110	31	79	9.5%	200	7.0%
Mining	70	21	49	10.6%	40	11	29	14.8%	70	10.6%
Personal & Other	140	42	98	8.2%	80	23	57	11.0%	140	8.2%
Property & Business	220	66	154	6.5%	120	34	86	8.9%	220	6.5%
Retail	220	66	154	6.7%	120	34	86	9.1%	220	6.7%
Transport & Storage	170	51	119	7.2%	100	29	71	9.6%	170	7.2%
Wholesale	150	45	105	8.1%	90	26	64	10.5%	150	8.1%
TOTAL	2500	750	1750	2.0%	1400	400	1000	2.7%	2500	2.0%
Size										
Small	1400	200	1200	2.6%	790	107	683	3.5%	1400	2.6%
Medium	700	250	450	3.0%	390	133	257	4.5%	700	3.0%
Large	400	300	100	3.9%	220	160	60	6.0%	400	3.9%
TOTAL	2500	750	1750	2.0%	1400	400	1000	2.6%	2500	2.0%
State/Territory										
NSW	450	135	315	4.7%	250	72	178	6.3%	450	4.7%
ACT	200	60	140	6.3%	110	32	78	9.0%	200	6.3%
VIC	400	120	280	4.9%	220	64	156	6.7%	400	4.9%
QLD	350	105	245	5.2%	200	56	144	7.0%	350	5.2%
SA	300	90	210	5.6%	170	48	122	7.5%	300	5.6%
WA	320	96	224	5.3%	180	51	129	7.3%	320	5.3%
NT	180	54	126	6.3%	100	29	71	9.2%	180	6.3%
TAS	300	90	210	5.4%	170	48	122	7.4%	300	5.4%
Total	2500	750	1750	2.0%	1400	400	1000	2.6%	2500	2.0%

Detailed standard error tables for each population group are included at Appendix 2.

Weighting the Sample

Analysis of the survey data requires weighting to account for the disproportionate sampling of establishments, and for the differential response rates, across strata.

The sample was post-stratified for weighting by Frame (Yellow Pages/GDS) x Industry group (17 groups) and State/Territory (8 groups) and Size (4 groups for Yellow Pages, 3 for GDS), x Employer Type (A, B or C for Yellow Pages, A or B for GDS) giving a total of 1,632 post-strata for the Yellow Pages sample and 816 post-strata for the GDS sample. Live, in-scope population counts were estimated for each of the 576 post-stratum using the contact information collected in the survey recruitment and telephone interview process. In-scope units for this purpose were those live units with employees (ie employers).

Calculating Yellow Pages Post-Stratum Counts

Yellow Pages post-stratum counts for live, in-scope units by employer type were estimated by taking the original stratum level population counts for each of the Industry and State and Size cells (after removing the counts for the GDS frame), and applying estimated rates for:

- live units for each Industry x State x Size cell
- in-scope units for each Industry x State x Size cell
- employer type (A, B or C) rates

Accuracy of the estimates

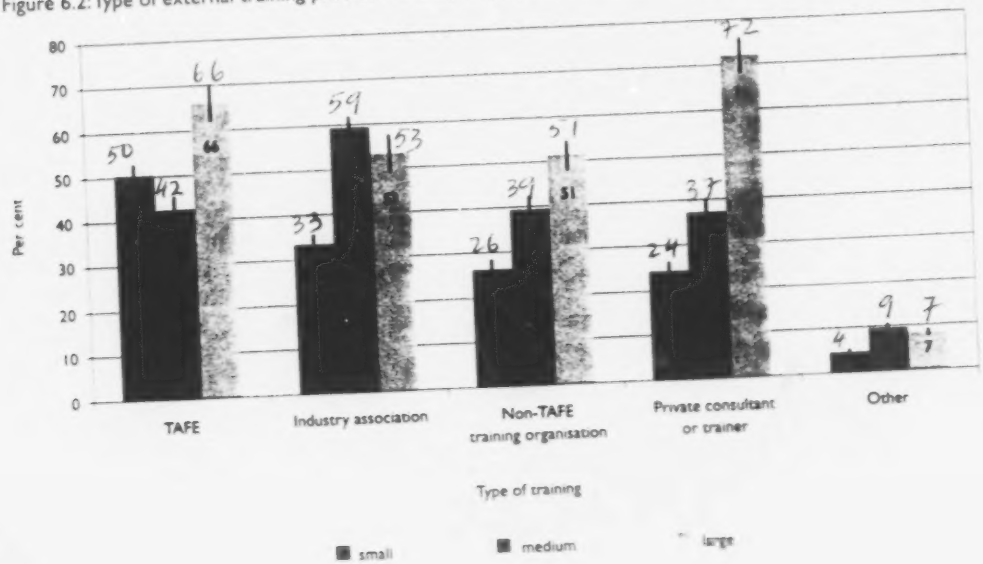
The Survey of Employer Views on VET was a sample survey. The survey provides estimates of the results that would be found had all employers in Australia been interviewed. As the employer survey estimates are based on information obtained only from a sample of employers, an allowance for sampling variability should be made when using the results.

Sampling variability can be measured by the standard error which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of employers was included. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error and about 19 chances in 20 that the difference will be less than two standard errors. For the estimates in this report, the size of two standard errors can be closely approximated by using to the standard error tables provided in Appendix 2. A worked example of how to use the standard error tables is also contained in Appendix 2.

Another measure of sampling variability is the relative standard error which is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate to which it refers. The relative standard error is a useful measure in that it provides an immediate indication of the percentage errors likely to have occurred due to sampling and avoids the need to refer also to the size of the estimate. Unless marked with *, the estimates in this publication have a relative standard error of less than 25% because estimates with sampling variability of this magnitude are not reliable for most practical purposes.

In terms of confidence intervals, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage value lies within two standard errors of the estimated percentage. For example, in figure 6.2, reproduced below, the line at the end of each bar (confidence interval line) shows the range for two standard errors. These confidence interval lines can also be used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences among values. In general, values with confidence interval lines that do not overlap indicate a significant difference exists at the 95% confidence level (for example, the difference in the estimates for small medium and large businesses for 'Private Consultant or Trainer' in figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Type of external training provider used by employers with recent VET graduates by employer size, per cent



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Appendix 2: Standard Error Tables

How to use the following standard error tables

As noted in Appendix 1, Accuracy of estimates, for the estimates in this report, the size of two standard errors can be closely approximated by referring to the standard error tables provided below by using the size of the sample or population on which an estimate is based, in conjunction with the size of the estimate itself.

Because there are four different populations on which estimates in this survey are based, a separate standard error look-up table is provided for each group as follows:

Table A: Employers with recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed training after commencing their current employment (population A)

Table B Employers with recent VET graduates, all of whom, completed training before commencing their current employment (population B)

Table C Employers with no VET graduates (population C)

Table AB Employers with recent VET graduates (population A+B)

Example 1

Table 4.3, reproduced below, shows estimates for employers with recent VET graduates in the left column and employers with no VET graduates in the right column. This means the estimates in the left column of the table are based on population A+B and estimates in the right column are based on population C. In this Appendix, the standard error look-up table for population A+B is table AB, and for population C, table C.

The left column of table 4.3 shows the survey estimates that 42% of employers with recent VET graduates reported they would be more likely to choose TAFE for a training provider. Standard error table AB shows the sample size upon which this estimate is based was 3,558. The table of standard errors also shows that for a sample size of 3,558, and a survey estimate of 40% (the closest to 42%), two standard errors is ±1.6%. In terms of confidence intervals, we can be close to 95% confident that the true percentage of employers with VET graduates who would choose TAFE, lies between 40.4% and 43.6%.

Table 4.3: Employers by choice of training provider, per cent

Choice of training provider	Employers with recent VET graduates	Employers with no VET graduates
More likely to choose TAFE	42	36
More likely to choose non-TAFE training provider	20	13
It would depend	34	31
Can't say at this stage	4	19
Total	100	100

Example 2

The right column of table 4.3 shows the survey estimates that 13% of employers with no VET graduates reported they would be more likely to choose a non-TAFE training provider. Standard error table C shows, the sample size upon which this estimate is based was 2,495. The table of standard errors also shows that for a sample size of 2,495, and a survey estimate of 15% (the closest to 13%), two standard errors is ±1.4%. In terms of confidence intervals, we can be close to 95% confident that the true percentage of employers with no VET graduates who would choose TAFE lies between 11.6% and 14.4%.

Example 3

Table 5.9, reproduced below, shows views on teacher ability for employers of recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment, that is, population A. The survey estimates that 52% of this group of employer in the Northern Territory felt that VET teachers currently providing VET, had most teaching skills. Standard error table A shows, the sample size for the Northern Territory (upon which this estimate is based) was 168. The standard error table A also shows that for the Northern Territory sample size of 168, and a survey estimate of 50%, (the closest to 52%), two standard errors is ±7.0%. In terms of confidence intervals, we can be close to 95% confident that the true percentage of this group of employers in the Northern Territory who felt that VET the teachers currently provided had most teaching skills lies between 45% and 59%.

Table 5.9: Employers' perceptions of the ability of teachers currently provided by VET providers, per cent (a)

Descriptions of levels of teacher ability	NSW n=518	VIC n=422	QLD n=369	SA n=314	WA n=283	TAS n=295	NT n=168	ACT n=135	AUST n=2,504
1. Minimal teaching ability	1	6	6	5	10	3	1	2	5
2. Some teaching ability	13	9	22	8	19	15	11	30	14
3. Most teaching skills	53	41	36	48	42	33	52	41	46
4. Complete teaching skills	23	21	23	26	24	28	24	21	23
Can't say	10	23	13	12	6	22	10	8	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Employers of recent VET graduates of whom at least one completed their training after commencing their current employment

Table A: Employers with recent VET graduates, of whom, at least one completed training after commencing their current employment (population A). 2 standard errors % for estimated proportion (+- this value for 95% confidence interval)

Strata	Population	Sample	5%/95%	10%/90%	15%/85%	20%/80%	25%/75%	30%/70%	35%/65%	40%/60%	45%/55%	50%
Agriculture	2092	54	5.9%	8.1%	9.7%	10.8%	11.7%	12.4%	12.9%	13.3%	13.5%	13.6%
Mining	557	53	5.8%	7.9%	9.4%	10.6%	11.4%	12.1%	12.6%	12.9%	13.1%	13.2%
Manufacturing	9160	262	2.7%	3.7%	4.4%	4.9%	5.3%	5.6%	5.8%	6.0%	6.1%	6.1%
Electricity	469	30	7.0%	10.0%	12.0%	14.4%	15.6%	16.5%	17.1%	17.6%	17.9%	18.0%
Construction	9016	195	3.1%	4.3%	5.1%	5.7%	6.2%	6.5%	6.8%	7.0%	7.1%	7.1%
Wholesale	5599	112	4.1%	5.6%	6.7%	7.5%	8.1%	8.6%	9.0%	9.2%	9.3%	9.4%
Retail	14989	280	2.6%	3.6%	4.2%	4.7%	5.1%	5.4%	5.7%	5.8%	5.9%	5.9%
Accommodation	4009	170	3.3%	4.5%	5.4%	6.0%	6.5%	6.9%	7.2%	7.4%	7.5%	7.5%
Transport	3001	167	3.3%	4.5%	5.4%	6.0%	6.5%	6.9%	7.2%	7.4%	7.5%	7.5%
Communications	1743	53	6.0%	8.2%	9.8%	10.9%	11.8%	12.5%	13.0%	13.4%	13.6%	13.7%
Finance	3110	109	4.1%	5.7%	6.8%	7.6%	8.2%	8.7%	9.0%	9.3%	9.4%	9.5%
Property	8206	241	2.8%	3.8%	4.5%	5.1%	5.5%	5.8%	6.1%	6.2%	6.3%	6.4%
Government	1086	107	4.0%	5.5%	6.6%	7.4%	8.0%	8.5%	8.8%	9.0%	9.2%	9.2%
Education	2835	117	4.0%	5.5%	6.5%	7.3%	7.9%	8.3%	8.7%	8.9%	9.0%	9.1%
Health	9119	258	2.7%	3.7%	4.4%	4.9%	5.3%	5.6%	5.9%	6.0%	6.1%	6.1%
Cultural	1621	143	3.5%	4.8%	5.7%	6.4%	6.9%	7.3%	7.6%	7.9%	8.0%	8.0%
Personal	7059	153	3.5%	4.8%	5.7%	6.4%	6.9%	7.4%	7.7%	7.9%	8.0%	8.0%
Total	83672	2504	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%
Size												
Small	61324	1127	1.3%	1.8%	2.1%	2.4%	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%	2.9%	2.9%	3.0%
Medium	15200	837	1.5%	2.0%	2.4%	2.7%	2.9%	3.1%	3.2%	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%
Large	7148	540	1.8%	2.5%	3.0%	3.3%	3.6%	3.8%	4.0%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
Total	83672	2504	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%
State/territory												
NSW	27966	518	1.9%	2.6%	3.1%	3.5%	3.8%	4.0%	4.2%	4.3%	4.3%	4.4%
Vic	19383	422	2.1%	2.9%	3.4%	3.9%	4.2%	4.4%	4.6%	4.7%	4.8%	4.8%
QLD	16306	369	2.2%	3.1%	3.7%	4.1%	4.5%	4.7%	4.9%	5.0%	5.1%	5.2%
SA	6912	314	2.4%	3.3%	3.9%	4.4%	4.8%	5.1%	5.3%	5.4%	5.5%	5.5%
WA	8448	283	2.6%	3.5%	4.2%	4.7%	5.1%	5.4%	5.6%	5.7%	5.8%	5.9%
TAS	2302	295	2.4%	3.3%	3.9%	4.4%	4.7%	5.0%	5.2%	5.3%	5.4%	5.4%
NT	883	168	3.0%	4.2%	5.0%	5.6%	6.0%	6.4%	6.6%	6.8%	6.9%	7.0%
ACT	1471	135	3.6%	4.9%	5.9%	6.6%	7.1%	7.5%	7.9%	8.1%	8.2%	8.2%
Total	83672	2504	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%

Table B: Employers with recent VET graduates, all of whom completed training before commencing their current employment (population B).2 standard errors % for estimated proportion (+- this value for 95% confidence interval)

Strata	Population	Sample	5%/95%	10%/90%	15%/85%	20%/80%	25%/75%	30%/70%	35%/65%	40%/60%	45%/55%	50%
Agriculture	449	20	9.8%	13.5%	16.0%	17.9%	19.4%	20.6%	21.4%	22.0%	22.3%	22.4%
Mining	89	17	9.8%	13.5%	16.1%	18.0%	19.5%	20.6%	21.4%	22.0%	22.4%	22.5%
Manufacturing	3828	71	5.2%	7.1%	8.5%	9.5%	10.3%	10.9%	11.3%	11.6%	11.8%	11.8%
Electricity	167	4	24.9%	34.2%	40.7%	45.6%	49.4%	52.3%	54.4%	55.9%	56.8%	57.0%
Construction	1809	43	6.6%	9.1%	10.9%	12.2%	13.2%	14.0%	14.5%	14.9%	15.2%	15.2%
Wholesale	1209	56	5.7%	7.9%	9.4%	10.5%	11.4%	12.1%	12.6%	12.9%	13.1%	13.2%
Retail	5148	103	4.3%	5.9%	7.0%	7.8%	8.5%	9.0%	9.4%	9.6%	9.8%	9.8%
Accommodation	3233	113	4.0%	5.6%	6.6%	7.4%	8.0%	8.5%	8.9%	9.1%	9.2%	9.3%
Transport	1029	97	4.2%	5.8%	6.9%	7.8%	8.4%	8.9%	9.3%	9.5%	9.7%	9.7%
Communications	135	30	7.1%	9.8%	11.7%	13.1%	14.2%	15.0%	15.6%	16.0%	16.3%	16.4%
Finance	419	30	7.8%	10.7%	12.8%	14.3%	15.5%	16.4%	17.1%	17.5%	17.8%	17.9%
Property	6108	162	3.4%	4.7%	5.6%	6.2%	6.7%	7.1%	7.4%	7.6%	7.7%	7.8%
Government	48	18	8.4%	11.5%	13.7%	15.4%	16.6%	17.6%	18.3%	18.8%	19.1%	19.2%
Education	770	44	6.5%	8.9%	10.6%	11.8%	12.8%	13.6%	14.1%	14.5%	14.7%	14.8%
Health	4925	124	3.9%	5.3%	6.4%	7.1%	7.7%	8.2%	8.5%	8.7%	8.9%	8.9%
Cultural	649	68	5.0%	6.9%	8.3%	9.2%	10.0%	10.6%	11.0%	11.3%	11.5%	11.6%
Personal	3602	54	5.9%	8.2%	9.7%	10.9%	11.8%	12.5%	13.0%	13.4%	13.6%	13.6%
Total	33617	1054	1.3%	1.8%	2.2%	2.4%	2.6%	2.8%	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Size												
Small	26757	709	1.6%	2.2%	2.6%	3.0%	3.2%	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%
Medium	6279	264	2.6%	3.6%	4.3%	4.8%	5.2%	5.5%	5.8%	5.9%	6.0%	6.0%
Large	581	81	4.5%	6.2%	7.4%	8.3%	9.0%	9.5%	9.9%	10.2%	10.3%	10.4%
Total	33617	1054	1.3%	1.8%	2.2%	2.4%	2.6%	2.8%	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
State/territory												
NSW	11161	178	3.3%	4.5%	5.3%	6.0%	6.5%	6.8%	7.1%	7.3%	7.4%	7.5%
Vic	8117	135	3.7%	5.1%	6.1%	6.9%	7.4%	7.9%	8.2%	8.4%	8.5%	8.6%
QLD	6539	115	4.0%	5.6%	6.6%	7.4%	8.0%	8.5%	8.9%	9.1%	9.2%	9.3%
SA	2711	129	3.8%	5.2%	6.2%	6.9%	7.5%	7.9%	8.2%	8.5%	8.6%	8.6%
WA	3211	168	3.3%	4.5%	5.4%	6.0%	6.5%	6.9%	7.2%	7.4%	7.5%	7.5%
Tas	929	146	3.3%	4.6%	5.4%	6.1%	6.6%	7.0%	7.3%	7.5%	7.6%	7.6%
NT	359	104	3.6%	5.0%	5.9%	6.6%	7.2%	7.6%	7.9%	8.1%	8.3%	8.3%
ACT	591	79	4.6%	6.3%	7.5%	8.4%	9.1%	9.7%	10.1%	10.3%	10.5%	10.5%
Total	33617	1054	1.3%	1.8%	2.2%	2.4%	2.6%	2.8%	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%

Table C: Employers with no VET graduates (population C). 2 standard errors. % for estimated proportion (+- this value for 95% confidence interval)

Strata	population	sample	5%/95%	10%/90%	15%/85%	20%/80%	25%/75%	30%/70%	35%/65%	40%/60%	45%/55%	50%
Agriculture	8466	78	4.9%	6.8%	8.1%	9.1%	9.8%	10.4%	10.8%	11.1%	11.3%	11.3%
Mining	454	63	5.1%	7.1%	8.4%	9.4%	10.2%	10.8%	11.2%	11.5%	11.7%	11.8%
Manufacturing	21995	216	3.0%	4.1%	4.8%	5.4%	5.9%	6.2%	6.5%	6.6%	6.8%	6.8%
Electricity	919	13	12.5%	17.2%	20.5%	22.9%	24.8%	26.3%	27.3%	28.1%	28.5%	28.7%
Construction	16384	169	3.3%	4.6%	5.5%	6.1%	6.6%	7.0%	7.3%	7.5%	7.6%	7.7%
Wholesale	18499	178	3.3%	4.5%	5.3%	6.0%	6.5%	6.9%	7.1%	7.3%	7.4%	7.5%
Retail	47376	256	2.7%	3.7%	4.5%	5.0%	5.4%	5.7%	6.0%	6.1%	6.2%	6.2%
Accommodation	18012	179	3.3%	4.5%	5.3%	6.0%	6.5%	6.8%	7.1%	7.3%	7.4%	7.5%
Transport	9063	185	3.2%	4.4%	5.2%	5.8%	6.3%	6.7%	7.0%	7.1%	7.3%	7.3%
Communication	1863	89	4.5%	6.2%	7.4%	8.3%	9.0%	9.5%	9.9%	10.2%	10.4%	10.4%
Finance	4874	124	3.9%	5.3%	6.4%	7.1%	7.7%	8.2%	8.5%	8.7%	8.9%	8.9%
Property	28317	302	2.5%	3.4%	4.1%	4.6%	5.0%	5.3%	5.5%	5.6%	5.7%	5.7%
Government	776	82	4.6%	6.3%	7.5%	8.4%	9.1%	9.6%	10.0%	10.3%	10.5%	10.5%
Education	6561	108	4.2%	5.8%	6.8%	7.7%	8.3%	8.8%	9.1%	9.4%	9.5%	9.6%
Health	25690	204	3.0%	4.2%	5.0%	5.6%	6.1%	6.4%	6.7%	6.8%	7.0%	7.0%
Cultural	3604	136	3.7%	5.1%	6.0%	6.8%	7.3%	7.7%	8.1%	8.3%	8.4%	8.4%
Personal	9594	113	4.1%	5.6%	6.7%	7.5%	8.1%	8.6%	9.0%	9.2%	9.3%	9.4%
Total	222449	2495	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Size												
Small	193255	1961	1.0%	1.3%	1.6%	1.8%	1.9%	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
Medium	26315	433	2.1%	2.9%	3.4%	3.8%	4.1%	4.4%	4.6%	4.7%	4.7%	4.8%
Large	2879	101	4.3%	5.9%	7.0%	7.9%	8.5%	9.0%	9.4%	9.6%	9.8%	9.8%
Total	222449	2495	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
State/territory												
NSW	73842	428	2.1%	2.9%	3.4%	3.9%	4.2%	4.4%	4.6%	4.7%	4.8%	4.8%
Vic	52455	403	2.2%	3.0%	3.5%	4.0%	4.3%	4.6%	4.7%	4.9%	4.9%	5.0%
QLD	43945	350	2.3%	3.2%	3.8%	4.3%	4.6%	4.9%	5.1%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%
SA	18294	322	2.4%	3.3%	4.0%	4.4%	4.8%	5.1%	5.3%	5.4%	5.5%	5.5%
WA	22096	322	2.4%	3.3%	4.0%	4.4%	4.8%	5.1%	5.3%	5.4%	5.5%	5.5%
Tas	5950	292	2.5%	3.4%	4.1%	4.6%	5.0%	5.2%	5.5%	5.6%	5.7%	5.7%
NT	2244	181	3.1%	4.2%	5.1%	5.7%	6.2%	6.6%	6.8%	7.0%	7.1%	7.1%
ACT	3623	197	3.0%	4.2%	5.0%	5.6%	6.0%	6.4%	6.6%	6.8%	6.9%	6.9%
Total	222449	2495	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%

Table A8 Employers with recent VET graduates – populations A plus B. 2 standard errors % for estimated proportion (+- this value for 95% confidence interval)

Strata	Population	Sample	5%/95%	10%/90%	15%/85%	20%/80%	25%/75%	30%/70%	35%/65%	40%/60%	45%/55%	50%
Agriculture	2541	74	5.0%	6.9%	8.2%	9.2%	10.0%	10.6%	11.0%	11.3%	11.5%	11.5%
Mining	646	70	5.0%	6.0%	8.1%	9.1%	9.8%	10.4%	10.8%	11.1%	11.3%	11.4%
Manufacturing	12980	333	2.4%	3.3%	3.9%	4.3%	4.7%	5.0%	5.2%	5.3%	5.4%	5.4%
Electricity	636	34	7.4%	10.2%	12.1%	13.5%	14.7%	15.5%	16.2%	16.6%	16.9%	16.9%
Construction	10825	230	2.8%	3.9%	4.6%	5.1%	5.6%	5.9%	6.1%	6.3%	6.4%	6.4%
Wholesale	6000	168	3.3%	4.6%	5.5%	6.1%	6.6%	7.0%	7.3%	7.5%	7.6%	7.6%
Retail	20137	383	2.2%	3.0%	3.6%	4.1%	4.4%	4.6%	4.8%	5.0%	5.0%	5.1%
Accommodation	7243	283	2.5%	3.5%	4.2%	4.7%	5.1%	5.4%	5.6%	5.7%	5.8%	5.8%
Transport	4830	264	2.6%	3.6%	4.3%	4.8%	5.2%	5.5%	5.7%	5.8%	5.9%	6.0%
Communications	1870	81	4.7%	6.5%	7.7%	8.6%	9.3%	9.9%	10.3%	10.6%	10.7%	10.8%
Finance	3529	139	3.6%	5.0%	6.0%	6.7%	7.2%	7.6%	8.0%	8.2%	8.3%	8.3%
Property	14313	401	2.1%	3.0%	3.5%	3.9%	4.3%	4.5%	4.7%	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%
Government	1134	125	3.7%	5.1%	6.0%	6.8%	7.3%	7.8%	8.1%	8.3%	8.4%	8.5%
Education	3605	161	3.4%	4.6%	5.5%	6.2%	6.7%	7.1%	7.4%	7.6%	7.7%	7.7%
Health	14044	382	2.2%	3.0%	3.6%	4.0%	4.4%	4.6%	4.8%	5.0%	5.0%	5.1%
Cultural	2271	211	2.9%	3.9%	4.7%	5.3%	5.7%	6.0%	6.3%	6.4%	6.5%	6.6%
Personal	15660	207	3.0%	4.1%	4.9%	5.5%	6.0%	6.3%	6.6%	6.8%	6.9%	6.9%
Total	117289	3558	0.7%	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%
Size												
Small	86081	1896	1.0%	1.4%	1.6%	1.8%	2.0%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
Medium	21480	1101	1.3%	1.8%	2.1%	2.3%	2.5%	2.7%	2.8%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%
Large	7728	621	1.7%	2.3%	2.8%	3.1%	3.3%	3.5%	3.7%	3.8%	3.8%	3.9%
Total	117289	3558	0.7%	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%
State/Territory												
NSW	39127	696	1.6%	2.3%	2.7%	3.0%	3.3%	3.4%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%	3.8%
Vic	27500	557	1.8%	2.5%	3.0%	3.4%	3.6%	3.8%	4.0%	4.1%	4.2%	4.2%
Qld	22044	494	2.0%	2.7%	3.2%	3.6%	3.9%	4.1%	4.3%	4.4%	4.5%	4.5%
SA	9624	443	2.0%	2.8%	3.3%	3.7%	4.0%	4.2%	4.4%	4.6%	4.6%	4.6%
WA	11659	451	2.0%	2.8%	3.3%	3.7%	4.0%	4.2%	4.4%	4.5%	4.6%	4.6%
Tas	3231	441	1.9%	2.7%	3.2%	3.5%	3.8%	4.1%	4.2%	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%
NT	1242	272	2.3%	3.2%	3.8%	4.3%	4.6%	4.9%	5.1%	5.2%	5.3%	5.4%
ACT	2862	214	2.8%	3.9%	4.6%	5.2%	5.6%	5.9%	6.2%	6.4%	6.5%	6.5%
Total	117289	3558	0.7%	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%

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Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industries Classification. (a classification which identifies sectors of industry to their main area of economic activity)
ASCO	Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to identify occupations according to their primary purpose)
Aspects of service	For the purposes of the survey's measurement of employer satisfaction with VET, 13 different aspects of service were assessed. 9 aspects of graduates' courses and 4 aspects of graduates' skills. Four possible levels of service were offered to respondents in order for them to rate each aspect.
Current level of service	For the purposes of the survey's measurement of employer satisfaction with aspects of VET, **current** refers to the level of service which the employer currently receives or has received in the recent past from VET training providers.
Direct or indirect experience of VET	Relates to employers of a VET graduate employee who had either: • commenced employment with the current employer before completing training ("direct") or • commenced employment with the current employer after completing training ("indirect")
Employee	A person to whom an employer pays a wage or salary
Employer	An Establishment unit (as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics) within Australia
Expected level of excellent service	For the purposes of the survey's measurement of employer satisfaction with aspects of VET, **expected** refers to the level of service which the employer would reasonably expect an excellent TAFE or training provider to offer
Graduate	For this report, a graduate is a person who has received a qualification (as defined under 'Qualification' below) in vocational education and training in Australia.
In Scope Employer	To be within the scope of the survey an **employer** either: 1. had an employee who completed a VET qualification within the last two years; or 2. did not have such an employee. Those employers who had a VET graduate employee at the time of the survey were divided into two subgroups, depending on their direct or indirect experience of VET (see definition below). The following groups were excluded as 'out of scope': • self employed not employing staff • private households employing staff • foreign diplomatic missions, consulates in Australia • defence force establishments.
Large employer	An establishment with over 100 employees
Medium employer	An establishment with between 20 and 99 employees

NCVER	The National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd
Non-TAFE training provider	An organisation, other than a TAFE organisation, providing vocational education and training
Qualification	Educational attainment for which an award is conferred upon successful completion. The qualification category classifications included in this survey are:

RATE

- Diploma
- Associate Diploma
- Advanced Certificate - Post Trade
- Advanced Certificate - Other
- Certificate - Trade
- Certificate – Other

AQF

- Bachelor's Degree
- Advanced Diploma
- Diploma
- Certificate IV
- Certificate III
- Certificate II
- Certificate I

Recent VET graduate	A person who, within the past two years has completed study leading to a VET qualification (as defined under "qualification" above)
Small employer	An establishment with between one and nineteen employees
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

1999 SURVEY OF EMPLOYER EXPERIENCE WITH AND VIEWS ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CATI QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION - Reception

Good morning/afternoon. My name is SAY NAME from .....

I'm calling on behalf of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

Could I talk to the manager responsible for staff training at your workplace?

IF NO EMPLOYEES THEN TERMINATE INTERVIEW

IF SEVERAL MANAGERS, ASK TO SPEAK TO THE MOST SENIOR MANAGER

IF NO TRAINING, PERSONNEL, STAFF DEVELOPMENT OR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, ASK TO SPEAK TO THE MANAGER OF THE ORGANISATION/BUSINESS

IF NOT AVAILABLE, MAKE APPOINTMENT

IF RESPONDENT AT ANY POINT SAYS THEY ANSWERED THIS SURVEY A YEAR OR TWO AGO TYPE [CTRL H] H FOR HELP SCREEN

HELP SCREEN

IF RESPONDENT AT ANY POINT SAYS THEY ANSWERED THIS SURVEY A YEAR OR TWO AGO SAY:

A survey similar to this was conducted in 1997. It is important that these surveys be updated to determine how effective new policies have been and to see if there are new developments that need to be taken into consideration. Due to the random nature of the sample, it is possible that an organisation could be included in both the 1997 and 1999 surveys.

INTRODUCTION - Manager

Good morning/afternoon. My name is SAY NAME from .....

I'm calling on behalf of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

Could I talk to the manager responsible for staff training at your workplace?

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) is seeking employers' views on the adequacy, quality, relevance, availability and value of vocational education and training and whether or not it is meeting the needs of organisations such as yours. We are doing this on behalf of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

Your views on vocational education and training are very important to the assessment of training delivery. The information you provide to us will remain confidential to the NCVER and results will not be published in a way that will allow identification of any individual business.

Do you have a few minutes to talk about that now, or should I make an appointment to call you back ?

IF NECESSARY, EXPLAIN

In most cases the survey may take a few minutes, depending upon what you have to say.

Your (organisation/business) was one of the several hundred selected from telephone listings to represent different industry sectors throughout Australia.

SCOPE & BACKGROUND

1. **Firstly, could I check what is the MAIN type of business activity carried out at this workplace?**

DISPLAY INDUSTRY TYPE FROM SAMPLE ON SCREEN

PROBE FULLY. TYPE IN RESPONSE AND THEN CODE

(YOU MUST TYPE IN THE RESPONSE AS WELL AS CODE)

- A Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- B Mining
- C Manufacturing
- D Electricity, Gas and Water Supply
- E Construction
- F Wholesale Trade
- G Retail Trade
- H Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants
- I Transport and Storage
- J Communication Services
- K Finance and Insurance
- L Property and Business Services
- M Government Administration and Defence
- N Education
- O Health and Community Services
- P Cultural and Recreational Services
- Q Personal and other Services

2. **Including full-time and part-time staff, how many employees currently work at or from this location?**

IF CAN'T SAY ENCOURAGE BEST GUESS. IF STILL CAN'T SAY, ESTIMATE

READ OUT

No employees	1 (TERMINATE)
1-5 employees	2
6-9 employees	3
10-19 employees	4
20-99 employees	5
100-499 employees	6
500-999 employees	7
1000 or more employees	8

IF NO EMPLOYEES (CODE 1 ON A2) TERMINATE, SAYING

Thankyou for your time, but we need to speak to organisations with employees

3 Do you have any employees at this location with a TAFE qualification or a similar vocational education and training qualification from a non-TAFE provider? Such qualifications can be gained through apprenticeships, traineeships, diplomas, associate diplomas or certificate courses. University qualifications are not included.

Yes	1	Go to 6
No	2	Go to 5
Don't know	9	Go to 4

4 These qualifications require at least one semester or 200 hours of training or study. Do you have any employees with qualificatinns like these?

Yes	1	Go to 6
No	2	Go to 5
Don't know	9	TERMINATE

5. What are the reasons this organisation does not have staff with vocational education qualifications ?

Have staff currently studying for such qualifications	1	Go to 49
These qualifications are not relevant to our industry [eg. Law Firm]	2	Go to 49
We have not been happy with the quality of VET qualifications	3	Go to 49
All our training requirements are provided in-house	4	Go to 49
Fully qualified people not required, staff attend only the modules reevant to our operations	5	Go to 49
Not aware of training available to suit our requirements	6	Go to 49
Other (specify)	8	Go to 49
Don't know	9	Go to 49

6. How many of these employees would have completed their vocational education and training qualification in the last two years?

None	1	TERMINATE
One	2	Go to 11
More than one (specify number) ENCOURAGE BEST GUESS	8	Go to 8a
Can't say	9	*

7. Would at least one employee have finished vocational education and training in the last two years?

YES - AT LEAST ONE	1	Go to 8a
NO - NOT ONE	2	TERMINATE
CAN'T SAY	3	Go to 49

IF Q6 = 8 INSERT NO. OF EMPLOYEES FROM Q6 = 8

IF Q6 = 9 LEAVE BLANK

8a. How many of these _____ graduates had completed their vocational education and training qualification **AFTER** taking up employment with your organisation?

IF CAN'T SAY ENCOURAGE BEST GUESS

Number completed qualification AFTER taking up employment

S1a IF 8a = 0 1. NONE GRAD AFTER EMPLOYMENT (POP B) GO TO Q9a

IF 8a = Q6 OR 8a = # AND Q6=9 2. ALL GRAD AFTER EMPLOYMENT (POP A) CONTINUE

IF 8a < Q6 3. SOME GRAD BEFORE & AFTER EMPLOY. CONTINUE

IF 8a = DK 4. GO TO Q49

IF 8a = 0 AND Q6=95, NONE GRAD AFTER EMPLOYMENT (POP B) GO TO Q9b

8b Of these current employees who completed their vocational education and training qualification **AFTER** taking up employment with your organisation, were they trained by ... **READ OUT**

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

TAFE?	1
Non-TAFE training providers?	2
(DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY	9

S1b IF S1a = 2 AND 8b = 1 ONLY OR 2 ONLY OR 9 ONLY, GO TO Q10

IF S1a = 2 OR 3 AND 8b = 1 AND 2, GO TO 8c

IF S1a = 3 AND 8b = 1 ONLY OR 2 ONLY OR 9 ONLY, GO TO 9a

8c At which type of institution were **MOST** of them trained?

(IF CAN'T SAY, ENCOURAGE BEST GUESS) DO NOT READ OUT

Mostly at TAFE	1
Mostly at non-TAFE	2
CAN'T SAY	9

S1c IF S1a = 2 GO TO Q10

IF S1a = 3 CONTINUE

9a CALCULATE NO OF GRADS WHO COMPLETED VOCATIONAL TRAINING BEFORE TAKING UP EMPLOYMENT

i) Q6 – Q8a =_____

So of the <Q6> employees who are recent VET graduates, <Q8a> completed their training after taking up employment with your organisation, and the remaining <Q9a> had completed their training before being employed by your organisation. Is that correct?

Yes	1 CONTINUE
No	2 AMEND NO'S IN Q6, Q8a & Q9a

9b **Of these current employees who completed their vocational education and training qualification BEFORE taking up employment with your organisation, were they trained by...**

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

TAFE?	1
Non-TAFE training providers?	2
(DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY	9

S2a IF 9b = 1 ONLY OR 2 ONLY OR 9 ONLY, GO TO Q10

OTHERWISE, CONTINUE

9c **At which type of institution were MOST of them trained?**

(IF CAN'T SAY, ENCOURAGE BEST GUESS) DO NOT READ OUT

Mostly at TAFE	1
Mostly at non-TAFE	2
(DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY	9

10 **Now, for all your employees who completed vocational education and training in the last two years, what is the name of the training institute or college at which most of these employees did their training? (LOOK UP INSTITUTE FILE)**

IF Q9c=2, GO TO CODE 98

Specify (NAME AND STATE)	8
Can't say	9

ALL GO TO Q15

11 **For your employee who completed vocational education and training in the last two years: Was this employee trained by...**

IF BOTH, RECORD MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED

TAFE	1
Non TAFE training providers	2
(DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY	9

12 **What is the name of this employee's training institute or college?**

LOOK UP INSTITUTE FILE

IF Q11=2, GO TO CODE 98

Specify (NAME AND STATE)	8
Can't say	9

13 **Which of the following best describes the level of the qualification which was awarded for the training this employee completed?**

Bachelor's Degree or higher	1
Advanced Diploma	2
Diploma	3
Associate Diploma	4
Advanced Certificate – post trade	5
Advanced Certificate – other	6
Certificate – trade	7
Certificate IV	8
Certificate III	9
Certificate II	10
Certificate I	11
Other certificate	12
Other (please specify)	98

14 **Did this employee complete their vocational education and training qualification BEFORE taking up employment with your organisation?**

Yes	1
No	2

15 IF Q6=2, SAY **Thinking of the current employee who completed vocational education and training in the last two years, were they trained in…**

IF Q6=8, SAY **Thinking of the <Q6>current employees who have completed vocational education and training in the last two years, were any trained in…**

READ OUT

Management and administration/Professional course	1
Technical and Para-professional course	2
Trade and apprenticeship course	3
Clerical/Office courses/ Sales and personal services course	4
Plant and machinery operating/driving, labouring and related course	5
Supervisory course	6
Other vocational training course (Specify)	8
Can't Say	9

16 IF Q6=2, SAY: **Thinking of the current employee who completed vocational education and training in the last two years, what type of training did they receive?**

IF Q6=8, SAY: **Thinking of the <Q6>current employees who have completed vocational education and training in the last two years, what type of training did they receive?**

S3 IF Q6=2 GO TO S4

OTHERWISE, CONTINUE

17 **About how many did this?**

READ OUT

	Q16 Type of Training	Q17 About how many?
Apprenticeship	1	
Traineeship	2	
Certificate or Diploma	3	
Some other sort of vocational training (SPECIFY)	8	
(DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY	9	

S4 INTERVIEW POPULATION HEIRARCHY

IF (S1a = 2 OR 3 AND Q8b=1 ONLY OR Q8c=1) OR (Q14=2 AND Q11=1) ➔ 1 - POP.4.1 (A – TAFE) –ASK ABOUT THIS POPULATION, IF NOT, ASK ABOUT,

(S1a = 2 OR 3 AND Q8b=2 ONLY OR Q8c=2)OR (Q14=2 AND Q11=2) ➔ 2 - POP.4.2 (A – NON TAFE) – IF NOT, ASK ABOUT,

(S1a=2 AND Q8b=9 OR Q8c=9) OR (Q14=2 AND Q11=9) ➔ 3 – POP.4.3 (A – GRADUATES), IF NOT, ASK ABOUT,

(S1a = 1 OR 5 AND Q9b=1 ONLY OR Q9c=1)OR (Q14 = 1 AND Q11=1) ➔ 4 - POP.4.4 (B – TAFE) – IF NOT, ASK ABOUT,

(S1a = 1 OR 5 AND Q9b=2 ONLY OR Q9c=2)OR (Q14=1 AND Q11=2) ➔ 5 - POP4.5 (B – NON TAFE) – IF NOT, ASK ABOUT,

(S1a=1 OR 5 AND Q9b=9 OR Q9c=9) OR (Q14=1 AND Q11=9) ➔ 6 – POP.4.6 (B – GRADUATES)

ALL CONTINUE TO Q18

D. IMPORTANCE & SATISFACTION WITH VET TRAINING

18 IF S4=1 SAY - **I would now like to ask you about the training received by your TAFE graduate(s) who completed their training AFTER you employed them.**

IF S4=2 SAY - **I would now like to ask you about the training received by your NON TAFE graduate(s) who completed their training AFTER you employed them.**

IF S4=3 SAY - **I would now like to ask you about the training received by your graduate(s) who completed their training AFTER you employed them.**

IF S4=4 SAY - **I would now like to ask you about the training received by your TAFE graduate(s) who completed their training BEFORE you employed them.**

IF S4=5 SAY - **I would now like to ask you about the training received by your NON TAFE graduate(s) who completed their training BEFORE you employed them.**

IF S4=6 SAY - **I would now like to ask you about the training received by your graduate(s) who completed their training BEFORE you employed them.**

S5 IF S4 = 1, 2 OR 3 GO TO Q19a

IF S4 = 4, 5 OR 6 GO TO Q19b

19a **For each of the following, please tell me how important each is to your overall satisfaction with <S4=1 SAY 'TAFE'S'; IF S4=2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDERS'; IF S4=3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDERS'>. Is it:**

Extremely important / Very important /Fairly important /Of minor importance

4 3 2 1

a Relevance of course content

b Course balance between theory and practice

c Flexibility in the course delivery (e.g. times, venues, duration, distance education etc.)

d Appropriateness of the assessment process

e Standard of equipment and facilities

f Level of communication about course development

g Teacher ability

h Teacher industry experience

i Availability of information about courses and subjects

j Level of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience

k Graduates' work ethic

l Graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision

m Value for money of the training investment, i.e. the cost of the course against productivity gains

ALL GO TO S6

101 100

19b For each of the following, please tell me how important each is to your overall satisfaction with <S4=1 SAY 'TAFE'S'; IF S4=2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDERS'; IF S4=3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDERS'>. Is it:

Extremely important/ Very important / Fairly important /Of minor importance

4 3 2 1

j Level of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience

k Graduates' work ethic

l Graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision

m Value for money of the training investment, i.e. the cost of the course against productivity gains

S6 IF S4 = 1, 2 OR 3 GO TO 20a

IF S4 = 4, 5 OR 6 GO TO 20b

20a. Of these 13 aspects of service, can you tell me in order of priority what four you would most like to see improvements in the level of service? (READ OUT THE ASPECTS AGAIN IF NECESSARY).

a Relevance of course content

b Course balance between theory and practice

c Flexibility in the course delivery (e.g. times, venues, duration, distance education etc.)

d Appropriateness of the assessment process

e Standard of equipment and facilities

f Level of communication about course development

g Teacher ability

h Teacher industry experience

i Availability of information about courses and subjects

j Level of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience

k Graduates' work ethic

l Graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision

m Value for money of the training investment, i.e. the cost of the course against productivity gains

n Can't Say GO TO S7a

ALL GO TO S7a

20b **Of these 4 aspects of service, can you tell me in order of priority what one you would most like to see improvements in the level of service? (READ OUT THE ASPECTS AGAIN IF NECESSARY).**

j Level of graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience

k Graduates' work ethic

l Graduates' ability to work and cope with setbacks without supervision

m Value for money of the training investment, i.e. the cost of the course against productivity gains

n Can't Say GO TO S7a

S7a IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

I'll now read you four different descriptions of levels of service that you might get on each aspect of service. For each aspect, please tell me which of the four descriptions most closely describes the level of service that you currently receive from the <TAFE / non-TAFE training provider>.

Next, for each of the aspects, I'd like you to tell me the level of service that you would reasonably expect an excellent training provider to offer. This is the service that you would expect them to provide. It is not necessarily the service that is actually offered.

S7b IF S4 = 4, 5 OR 6 GO TO S17

OTHERWISE, CONTINUE

GRADUATES COURSES

Thinking about the relevance of course content:

S8 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

21 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the course content that the <TAFE / non-TAFE training provider> CURRENTLY provides?**

READ OUT

1. Not relevant to the industry's current needs
2. Mostly current and useable by the industry
3. Directly relevant to the needs of the industry
4. At the leading edge of the industry's needs
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

22 Which of these four descriptions best describes the course content that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 21

Thinking about the course balance between theory and practice:

S9 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

23 Which of these four descriptions best describes the courses CURRENTLY provided by the <TAFE / non-TAFE training provider>?

1. An uneven balance of inadequate theory and practice.
2. The basic practical skills and some theory.
3. A reasonable balance between most of the needed practice and theory
4. All the necessary practical skills matched by the required theory
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

24 Which of these four descriptions best describes the courses that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 23

Thinking about flexibility in course delivery, e.g. times, venues, duration, distance education etc:

S10 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

25 Which of these four descriptions best describes the level of service that you CURRENTLY receive from the <TAFE / non-TAFE training provider>?

1. No flexibility
2. Limited Choice
3. The institutions will try to meet individual and industry needs
4. Custom design to suit industry and individual needs
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

26 Which of these four descriptions best describes the level of service that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 25

Thinking about teacher ability:

S11 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

103

27 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the teachers that the <TAFE / non-TAFE training providers> CURRENTLY provide?**

1. Minimal teaching ability
2. Some teaching ability
3. Most teaching skills
4. Complete teaching skills.
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

28 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the teachers that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?**

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 27

Thinking about teacher industry experience:

S12 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

29 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the teachers that the <TAFE / non-TAFE providers> CURRENTLY provide?**

1. No recent industry experience
2. Little industry experience
3. Some relevant industry experience
4. Recent and relevant industry experience.
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

30 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the teachers that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?**

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 29

Thinking about appropriateness of the assessment process:

S13 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

31 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the assessment process that the <TAFE / non-TAFE training providers> CURRENTLY provide?**

1. No appropriate assessment is undertaken.
2. Meets only some of industry's needs
3. Measures many of the skills valued by industry
4. Relevant, rigorous, and matches industry requirements.
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

32 Which of these four descriptions best describes the assessment process that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 31

Thinking about the overall standard of equipment and facilities

S14 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

33 Which of these four descriptions best describes the equipment and facilities that the <TAFE / non-TAFE training providers> CURRENTLY provide?

1. Inadequate and do not meet industry standards
2. Just adequate
3. Comply with current industry standards
4. State of the art
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

34 Which of these four descriptions best describes the equipment and facilities that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 33

Thinking about the level of communication about course development:

S15 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

35 Which of these four descriptions best describes the level of communication that you CURRENTLY receive from the <TAFE / non-TAFE training provider>?

1. Industry input into course design is discouraged
2. Industry has limited input into the design of courses
3. Industry and the institutions communicate well
4. Institutions actively seek industry involvement
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

36 Which of these four descriptions best describes the level of communication that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 35

Thinking about the availability of information about courses and subjects:

S16 IF S4 = 1 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

37 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the information that you CURRENTLY receive from the <TAFE / non-TAFE training provider>?**

1. Difficult to assess
2. Available but not directed to industry needs
3. Readily available and specific to industry needs
4. Keep us fully informed about courses and options to meet all our needs
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

38 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the information that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?**

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 37

GRADUATES SKILLS

S17 IF S4 = 1 OR 4 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 OR 5 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 OR 6 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

I now want to ask about the level of service from the <TAFE / non-TAFE training provider>. These aspects relate to graduates' skills

Comparing graduates with non-graduates with similar work experience.

S18 IF S4 = 1 OR 4 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 OR 5 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 OR 6 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

39 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the skills of recent graduates from the <TAFE / non-TAFE provider>?**

READ OUT

1. Don't show any better skills
2. Have a few more of the required skills
3. More effectively apply the skills they've learned
4. Have significantly improved skills and productivity
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

40 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the graduates that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?**

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 39

Thinking about the graduates' work ethic:

S19 IF S4 = 1 OR 4 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 OR 5 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 OR 6 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

41 Which of these four descriptions best describes the recent graduates from the <TAFE/ non-TAFE provider>?

READ OUT

1. Show almost no interest in their work
2. Show some interest in their work and occasionally use some initiative
3. Concentrate on their work and mostly focus on quality
4. Are really involved in their work and always strive for excellence
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

42 Which of these four descriptions best describes the graduates that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 41

Thinking about the ability of graduates to work and cope with setbacks without supervision:

S20 IF S4 = 1 OR 4 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 OR 5 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 OR 6 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

43 Which of these four descriptions best describes the recent graduates from the <TAFE/ non-TAFE provider>?

READ OUT

1. Need virtually 100% supervision and cannot cope with even minor work problems
2. Need quite a lot of supervision, but can cope with minor work problems.
3. Need some supervision, but generally cope well with most work problems.
4. Can work virtually unsupervised, and are prepared to take ownership of the job and any problems.
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

44 Which of these four descriptions best describes the graduates that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 43

Thinking about the value for money of the training investment, i.e. cost of the course against productivity gains:

S21 IF S4 = 1 OR 4 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 OR 5 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 OR 6 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

45 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the value for money that you CURRENTLY receive from the <TAFE/NON-TAFE training provider>?**

1. The courses mostly waste our money
2. In the long term we probably break even
3. We get reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of course graduates.
4. An excellent return on investment - productivity increases greatly exceed the costs of courses.
9. (DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY

46 **Which of these four descriptions best describes the value for money that you would reasonably EXPECT an excellent training organisation to provide?**

REPEAT SAME DESCRIPTIONS AS FOR 45

C1 DID THE RESPONDENT COMPLETE Q21 TO Q46...

ALL IN CATI	1
WITH AN EMAILED CODE LIST	2
WITH A FAXED CODE LIST	3

S22bIF S4 = 1 OR 4 SAY 'TAFE'

IF S4 = 2 OR 5 SAY 'NON TAFE TRAINING PROVIDER'

IF S4 = 3 OR 6 SAY 'TRAINING PROVIDER'

47. **Thinking of the <TAFE/non-TAFE training providers> you have had experience with. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfied, overall, how satisfied are you with the overall performance of the <TAFE/non-TAFE training providers> you have had experience with?**

Very dissatisfied	1
	2
	3
	4
Neutral	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
Very satisfied	10
Can't say	99

Q48 NOT USED

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF VET

49 Attitudes

I am now going to read you a series of statements which some people have made about vocational education and training in Australia. For each statement, please tell me whether you strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Dis-Agree	Strongly Disagree	Can't Say

(ROTATE STATEMENTS)
(RECORD ROTATION)

49a It is more cost-effective to recruit trained people than to train people on the job

49b On-the-job skills are more useful tha skills obtained through formal education

49c The vocational education and training (VET) system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers needs

49d Training pays for itself through increased worker productivity

49e The vocational education and training (VET) system needs to provide more practical job skills

49f Employers should have more input into course content

49g The vocational education and training (VET)system does not take into account the needs of employers

49h It is difficult to tell what a person can actually do from their educational qualifications

49i Qualifications should be based on what the person can actually do, rather than how many years of training they have completed

49j There should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training

50 Do you currently have regular contact with TAFE colleges or other training providers who provide courses relevant to your industry?

Yes	1
No	2 Go to 52

51 What level would you say is this contact, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is minimal contact and 5 is a high level of contact?

Level ....

109

52 **In arranging training for your employees, if a TAFE and a non-TAFE training provider were to offer similar training courses, would you be more likely to choose the TAFE course or the course of the non-TAFE training provider?**

More likely to choose TAFE	1	Go to 54
More likely to choose non-TAFE training provider	2	Go to 53
It would depend	3	Go to 55
Can't say	9	Go to 56

53 **What is the main reason you would choose a non-TAFE training provider rather than a TAFE?**

Credibility/acceptance	1
Recognition within the industry/recognition of qualification	2
Effective training programs/good standards/standards monitoring	3
Reputation for competency/stability/experience	4
More flexible timetable to suit employment	5
Courses more tailored to needs of workplace	6
Offer better service	7
Offer hands on experience	8
Satisfactory past experience/previous dealings	9
Other (specify)	98
GO TO 56	

54 **What is the main reason you would choose a TAFE rather than a non-TAFE training provider?**

Credibility/acceptance	1
Recognition within the industry/recognition of qualification	2
Effective training programs/good standards/standards monitoring	3
Reputation for competency/stability/experience	4
More flexible timetable to suit employment	5
Courses more tailored to needs of workplace	6
Offer better service	7
Offer hands on experience	8
Satisfactory past experience/previous dealings	9
Other (specify)	98
GO TO 56	

55 What would it depend upon?

Cost	1
Quality of the course	2
Quality of the teacher	3
Type of course	4
Reputation of course	5
Accreditation	6
Other (SPECIFY)	98
Can't Say	99

56 Do you currently have sufficient information to make an effective choice of training provider and course for your employees, apprentices or trainees?

DON'T READ	
Yes	1 Go to 58
No	2
Can't Say	9 Go to 58

57 What additional information do you need to make an effective choice?

DO NOT READ OUT	
PROBE FULLY	
More information on	
Content of course/analysis of course content	1
What courses are available	2
Accreditation/directory of accredited courses	3
Qualification/credibility of trainers	4
Facilities for hands-on/practical training	5
Funding options/subsidies available /cost of course	6
More current information	7
Ability to meet industry requirements/needs	8
Other (specify)	98
VET KNOWLEDGE & PRACTICES	

The next few questions refer to training in general in your organisation or business, not just the Vocational Education and Training graduates we have been discussing.

113

58 Who or what, outside your organisation, would be your MAIN source of information on vocational training and skills development matters?

DO NOT READ OUT

TAFE	1
Government Training Departments/Authorities	2
Industry associations	3
Newspapers/magazines	4
Friends	5
No main source	6
Other (SPECIFY)	8
Can't Say	9

59. In the last 12 months, has your organisation experienced recruitment difficulties?

Yes	1
No	2 Go to 62
Can't Say	9 Go to 62

60. Has this led to insufficient numbers of staff in any occupational groups?

Yes	1
No	2 Go to 62

61 How many people in each occupation group do you require to meet your needs now?

Occupation No ....

Occupation No ....

Occupation No ....

Occupation No ....

62 During the last 12 months has your organisation paid for, or subsidised, the cost of any employee training or provided paid time off work for an employee to attend training?

Yes	1
No	2 Go to 68
Can't Say	9 Go to 68

63. Which of the following methods of training were undertaken?

READ OUT

On-the-job training (that is by showing an employee how to improve job skills in work being undertaken)	1
In-house training (that is, organised by employer for own staff using employer's staff or training consultants)	2
External training (that is, organised and conducted at venues outside the workplace by training or educational establishments, agencies or private consultants	3
(DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY	9

S23 IF Q63 = 2 GO TO Q64

OTHERWISE GO TO Q66

64 Are any of the in-house training courses conducted in your organisation accredited?

Yes	1 Go to 65
No	2 Go to 66

65 Last year the Australian National Training Authority introduced a new approach to vocational education and training. Competencies, qualifications and assessment guidelines have been linked together into Training Packages. These Training Packages are developed by national industry training advisory bodies (ITABs) and tailored to meet industry needs. Also, many businesses have extensive and sophisticated training operations and these businesses can register to enable them to train employees to industry standards using Training Packages.

Are any of your organisations in-house, accredited training courses conducted using these Training Packages?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	9

66 EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS USED FOR TRAINING DELIVERY (CODE 3 IN 63) 1 GO TO 67

OTHERWISE 2 GO TO 68

67 Which of the following organisations were used to provide the training?

READ OUT

TAFE	1
Industry Association	2
Non-TAFE Training Organisation	3
Private Consultant or Trainer	4
Community or Adult Education Centre	5
DON'T READ None (own trainers)	6
DON'T READ Other (SPECIFY)	98
DON'T READ Can't Say	99

68 At any time in the last 12 months have you been approached to provide work experience for a student?

Yes	1
No	2
Can't Say	9

69 Has your organisation ever provided work experience for a student?

Yes	1
No	2
Can't Say	9
S24 IF Q5 = 1 GO TO 71	
OTHERWISE, GO TO 70	

As I explained at the beginning, this survey is mainly interested in employees who have finished a vocational training course of at least 200 hours or one semester and you may have employees working towards this.

70 Do you have any employees at this location who are CURRENTLY studying for an industry recognised vocational education and training qualification with a TAFE or a private training provider?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	9

71 Do you have any employees who have completed courses of LESS THAN 200 hours OR LESS THAN ONE SEMESTER in the last 2 years?

Yes	1
No	2 Go to 73
Can't say	9 Go to 73

72 Was the training provided by:

MULTIPLE RESPONSE

TAFE	1
Non-TAFE training providers	2
(DON'T READ) CAN'T SAY	9

73 As an employer, what suggestions would you make for improvements in the training system? (RECORD VERBATIM)

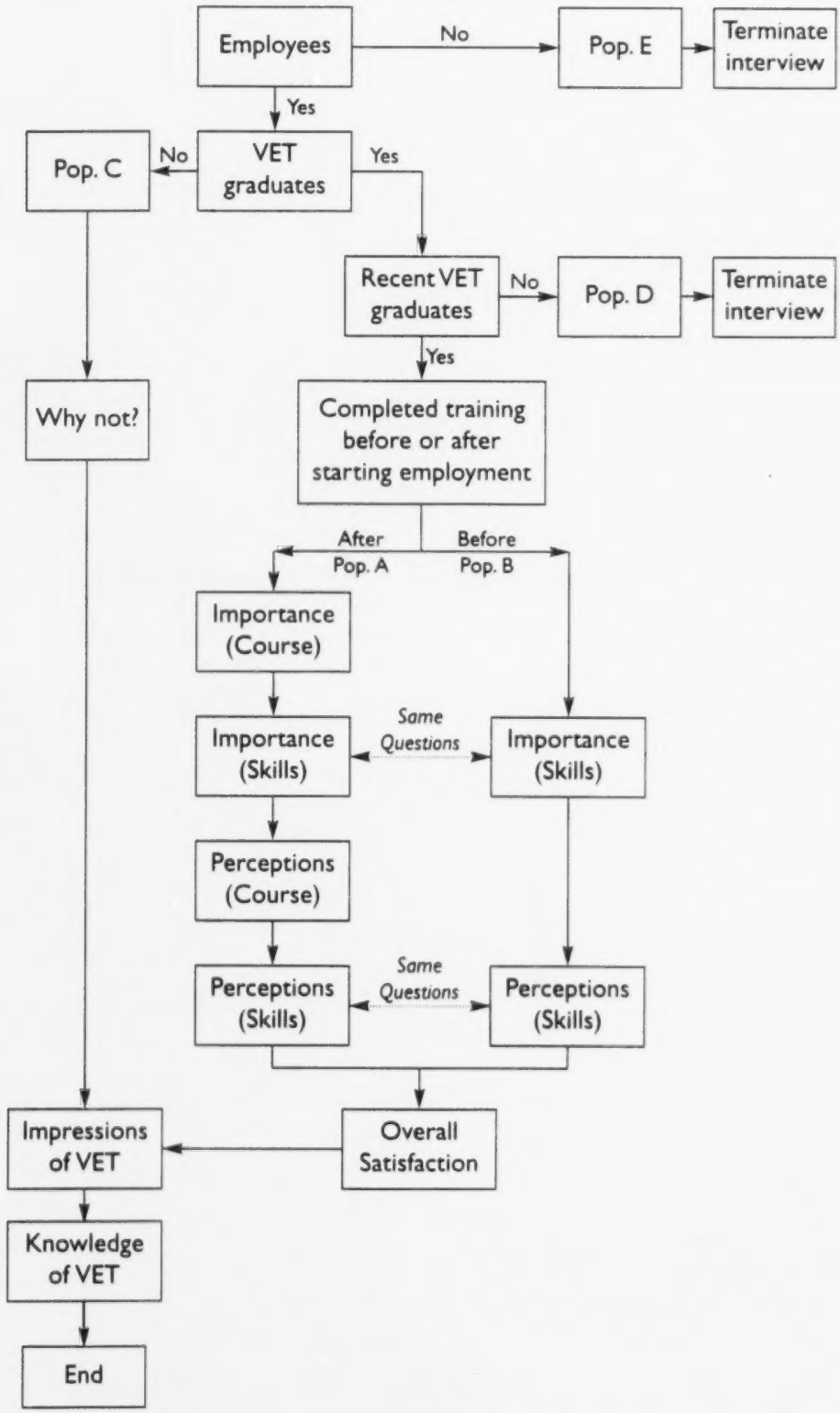
Can't Say	99
None	97

74 What changes in your industry do you expect could affect your training requirements in the future? (RECORD VERBATIM)

Can't Say	99

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Appendix 5: Population Flowchart



Appendix 6: Data Item List

Data Item list for the 1999 Survey of Employer Views

Population	Data Item
All Employers	• Industry • Number of employees • Whether has a VET graduate employee
All in-scope employers (ie employers with a recent VET graduate employee and employers without any VET graduate employees)	**General Impressions of VET** • Degree of agreement with the following 10 statements about VET 1. It is more cost-effective to recruit trained people than to train people on the job 2. On-the-job skills are more useful than skills obtained through formal education 3. The vocational education and training (VET) system is providing graduates with skills appropriate to employers' needs 4. Training pays for itself through increased worker productivity 5. The vocational education and training (VET) system needs to provide more practical job skills 6. Employers should have more input into course content 7. The vocational education and training (VET)system does not take into account the needs of employers 8. It is difficult to tell what a person can actually do from their educational qualifications 9. Qualifications should be based on what the person can actually do, rather than how many years of training they have completed 10. There should be more work experience or work placements as part of vocational training • Whether currently has regular contact with the TAFE institutes or training providers • Respondent assessment of their degree of contact • Preference for TAFE or non-TAFE provider • Reasons for preference

All in-scope employers (continued) (ie employers with a recent VET graduate employee and employers without any VET graduate employees)	**VET Practices and Knowledge** • Main source of information about VET training and skills • Whether had any recruitment difficulties in the last 12 months • Occupation groups in which there are skill shortages • Numbers required in each occupation with skill shortage • Whether paid for or subsidised the cost of any employee training, or provided time off work for training • If paid for or subsidised training for any employees, type of training provider paid for • Methods of training used for employees • If in-house training used, whether training packages used to deliver accredited courses • Organisations used for training delivery • Whether been approached in the last 12 months to provide work experience for a student • Whether ever provided work experience for a student • Whether any industry changes are expected to affect training requirements in the future • Whether has any employees currently studying for a VET qualification • Whether any of their employees completed courses of < 200 hours in the last 2 years
Employers without a VET graduate	• Reasons for not employing a VET graduate
Employers with a recent VET graduate	**Type of Training** • Number of recent VET graduate employees, if only one graduate, AQF level of qualification • Number of employees who completed this training before being employed with selected business • Number of employees who completed this training after being employed with selected business • Type of training (apprenticeship, traineeship, certificate/diploma, other) • Number who did apprenticeship, traineeship, certificate/diploma, other • Whether (most) completed training before or after began current employment • Whether trained by TAFE and/or non-TAFE providers • Type of institution where most of them trained

Employers with a recent VET graduate (continued)	• Type of training course • Name of training institute where (most) trained • If one graduate only, AQF level of their qualification • Overall satisfaction with performance of TAFE • Overall satisfaction with performance of non-TAFE provider
Employers with any recent graduates who completed training **after** commencing current employment and who were (mostly) TAFE (see Appendix 7 for list of aspects)	• Importance of 9 aspects of graduates' training course and 4 aspects of graduates' skills • Top 4 (see Appendix 7 for list of aspects) ranked aspects respondent would like to see improved
Employers with all recent graduates who all completed training **before** commencing current employment and who were (mostly) TAFE	• Importance of 4 aspects of graduates' skills • Top ranked aspect respondent would like to see improved
Employers with any recent graduates who completed training **after** commencing current employment and who were (mostly) non-TAFE	• Importance of 9 aspects of graduates' training course and 4 aspects of graduates' skills • Top 4 ranked aspects respondent would like to see improved
Employers with all recent graduates who all completed training **before** commencing current employment and who were (mostly) non-TAFE	• Importance of 4 aspects of graduates' skills • Top ranked aspect respondent would like to see improved
Employers with any recent graduates who completed training **after** commencing current employment	• Rating of the current level of delivery for 9 aspects of graduates' training course and 4 aspects of graduates' skills • Rating of the level of delivery for 9 aspects of graduates' training course and 4 aspects of graduates' skills that would be expected from an excellent training provider
Employers with recent graduates who all completed training **before** commencing current employment	• Rating of the current level of delivery for 4 aspects of graduates' skills • Rating of the level of delivery for 4 aspects of graduates' skills that would be expected from an excellent training provider

9 ASPECTS OF GRADUATES' COURSE DELIVERY

Aspect	Response options			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Relevance of course content	Not relevant to the industry's current needs	Mostly current and useable by the industry	Directly relevant to the needs of the industry	At the leading edge of the industry's needs
Course balance between theory and practice	An uneven balance of inadequate theory and practice	The basic practical skills and some theory	A reasonable balance between most of the needed practice and theory	All the necessary practical skills matched by the required theory
Flexibility in course delivery, e.g. times, venues, duration, distance education etc	No flexibility	Limited choice	The institutions will try to meet individual and industry needs	Custom design to suit industry and individual needs
Teacher ability	Minimal teaching ability	Some teaching ability	Most teaching skills	Complete teaching skills
Teacher industry experience	No recent industry experience	Little industry experience	Some relevant industry experience	Recent and relevant industry experience.
Appropriateness of the assessment process	No appropriate assessment is undertaken	Meets only some of industry's needs	Measures many of the skills valued by industry	Relevant, rigorous, and matches industry requirements
Overall standard of equipment and facilities	Inadequate and do not meet industry standards	Just adequate	Comply with current industry standards	State of the art
Level of communication about course development	Industry input into course design is discouraged	Industry has limited input into the design of courses	Industry and the institutions communicate well	Institutions actively seek industry involvement
Availability of information about courses and subjects	Difficult to assess	Available but not directed to industry needs	Readily available and specific to industry needs our needs	Keep us fully informed about courses and options to meet all

4 ASPECTS OF GRADUATES' SKILLS

Aspect	Response options			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Graduates' work skills compared to non-graduates with similar work experience	Don't show any better skills	Have a few more of the required skills	More effectively apply the skills they've learned	Have significantly improved skills and productivity
Graduates' work ethic	Show almost no interest in their work	Show some interest in their work and occasionally use initiative	Concentrate on their work and some mostly focus on quality	Are really involved in their work and always strive for excellence
Ability of graduates to work and cope with setbacks without supervision	Need virtually 100% supervision and cannot cope with even minor work problems	Need quite a lot of supervision, but can cope with minor work problems	Need some supervision, but generally cope well with most work problems problems	Can work virtually unsupervised, and are prepared to take ownership of the job and any
Value for money of the training investment, i.e. cost of the course against productivity gains	The courses mostly waste our money	In the long term we probably break even	We get reasonable financial benefit from the increased productivity of course graduates	An excellent return on investment - productivity increases greatly exceed the costs of courses

This publication presents detailed information from the 1999 survey of employer views on VET. It contains results of surveying 3,558 employers of recent VET graduates and 2,495 employers with no VET graduates. For both employer groups, it includes findings on employers' characteristics, their general views on VET, as well as some information on their organisations' training practices. Additional information on specific aspects of the quality, relevance and availability of VET was sought from employers of recent VET graduates.

A summary of the information is also available in Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics 1999, Survey of Employer Views: at a glance.

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